

BALTIMORE™

THE RED KINGDOM

MIKE
MIGNOLA

CHRISTOPHER
GOLDEN

PETER
BERGTING

MICHELLE
MADSEN





The Red King amasses power on his way to his Vatican coronation while his armies sweep across Europe in an unholy war. Lord Baltimore is missing, and his allies are scattered across the continent. Is there any chance left for the resistance to stem the oncoming tide before the world is drowned in blood?

BALTIMORE

The Red Kingdom





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THE RED KINGDOM

VOLUME EIGHT

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DarkHorse.com

Published by Dark Horse Books
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222

International Licensing: (503) 905-2377
Comic Shop Locator Service: (888) 266-4226

First edition: October 2017
Digital ISBN 978-1-63008-512-4

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This volume collects *Baltimore: The Red Kingdom* #1–#5, published by Dark Horse Comics.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mignola, Michael, author. | Golden, Christopher, author. | Bergting, Peter, artist. | Madsen, Michelle (Illustrator), artist. | Robins, Clem, 1955- letterer. | Stewart, Dave, artist. | Stenbeck, Ben, artist.

Title: Baltimore. Volume 8, The Red Kingdom / story by Mike Mignola, Christopher Golden ; art by Peter Bergting ; colors by Michelle Madsen ; letters by Clem Robins ; cover art by Mike Mignola with Dave Stewart ; chapter break art by Ben Stenbeck.

Other titles: Red Kingdom

Description: First edition. | Milwaukie, OR : Dark Horse Books, 2017. | "This volume collects *Baltimore: The Red Kingdom* #1-#5, published by Dark Horse Comics."

Identifiers: LCCN 2017018446 | ISBN 9781506701974 (hardback)

Subjects: | BISAC: COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / Horror.

Classification: LCC PN6727.M53 B39 2017 | DDC 741.5/973--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017018446>

JANUARY 1, 1925. A LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER STANLEY BALDWIN FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MI6, ADMIRAL SIR HUGH SINCLAIR, KNOWN AS "C." THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS CLASSIFIED.

MY DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER: WHEN I BEGAN MY TENURE IN THE FOREIGN SECTION, I NEVER IMAGINED WRITING A REPORT SUCH AS THIS.



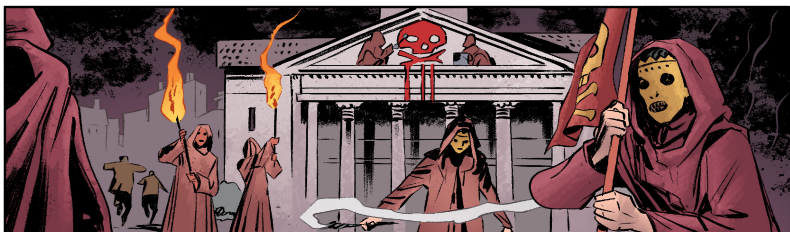
AT THE END OF THE WAR, WHEN THE PLAGUE SENT ALL OF EUROPE SCURRYING BACK TO OUR HOMES TO PROTECT OUR LOVED ONES FROM ITS HORROR, WE COULD NEVER HAVE FORESEEN THE LARGER HORRORS TO COME.



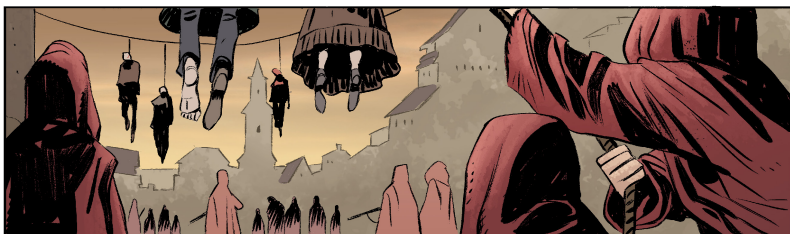
AS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS DIED, ONLY A PRECIOUS FEW KNEW THAT THE REAL THREAT HAD BARELY BEGUN TO SHOW ITSELF. OUR GREATEST SIN WAS THAT WE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WHEN THE RED KING'S WORSHIPERS BEGAN TO WAVE HIS BANNERS.



WE THOUGHT THEY WERE SO CALLOUS AND IGNORANT THAT THEY COULD ONLY EXIST IN SMALL NUMBERS, THAT DECENCY AND RATIONALITY WERE STRONGER THAN FEAR AND MISTRUST. BY THE TIME HE APPEARED IN THE FLESH, IT WAS TOO LATE.



HIS INFLUENCE BECAME A CONTAGION. WHEN HE BEGAN TO TAKE CITIES, TO GATHER ARMIES, WE THOUGHT OUR ONLY HOPE AGAINST HIM WAS A TRADITIONAL WAR OF MEN AND GUNS.



GOD HELP US,
WE WERE RIGHT.

IT **WAS** OUR ONLY HOPE.



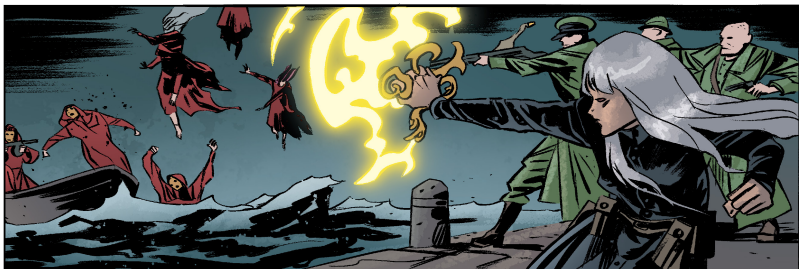
NATIONS HAVE BOWED BEFORE HIM, GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO HIS TWISTED VISION AND THE FEAR OF ANNIHILATION. HIS KINGDOM GROWS BY THE WEEK. RUSSIA HAS FALLEN, AND HE'S MADE A PACT WITH CHINA. WE CANNOT EXPECT HELP FROM THE EAST.



OUR ALLIANCE IS STRONG, MR. PRIME MINISTER. THE GERMANS, THE FRENCH, THE ITALIANS, THE AMERICANS, AND A DOZEN OTHER NATIONS ALL SERVE THE SAME MISSION--STOP THE RED KING. BUT LOSSES MOUNT, AND GAINS ARE FLEETING.



THE RED KING'S ARMY GROWS, AND THOUSANDS HAVE JOINED THE CULT THAT FIGHTS FOR HIM. THERE ARE THE WITCHES AND VAMPIRES AND DEAD THINGS...BUT WORST OF ALL...



...THE HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR PERMISSION TO INDULGE IN THE KINDS OF HORRORS THE RED KING ENCOURAGES.



MR. PRIME MINISTER, WE WILL NEVER TURN BACK THE TIDE. EVEN WITH OUR NEW ALLIANCES, WE WILL HOLD EUROPE FOR SIX MONTHS AT BEST. WE MUST FIND AND KILL THE RED KING HIMSELF, OR FALL BENEATH HIS BOOT.



I AWAIT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. IF THERE IS ANY SECRET WEAPON YOU HAVE YET TO EMPLOY, I BEG YOU, DO IT BY THE TIME SPRING ARRIVES IN EUROPE...WITHOUT SUCH A BOON, WE SHALL--NONE OF US--LIVE TO SEE THE SUMMER.



CHAPTER ONE





APRIL 17, 1925.

SWITZERLAND.

REMOVE
MY SIN, AND
I WILL BE
CLEAN.

WASH ME, AND
I WILL BE
WHITER THAN
SNOW...

"LET ME HEAR THE
SOUNDS OF JOY
AND GLADNESS..."

"...AND THOUGH YOU
HAVE CRUSHED ME
AND BROKEN ME..."

**KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK**

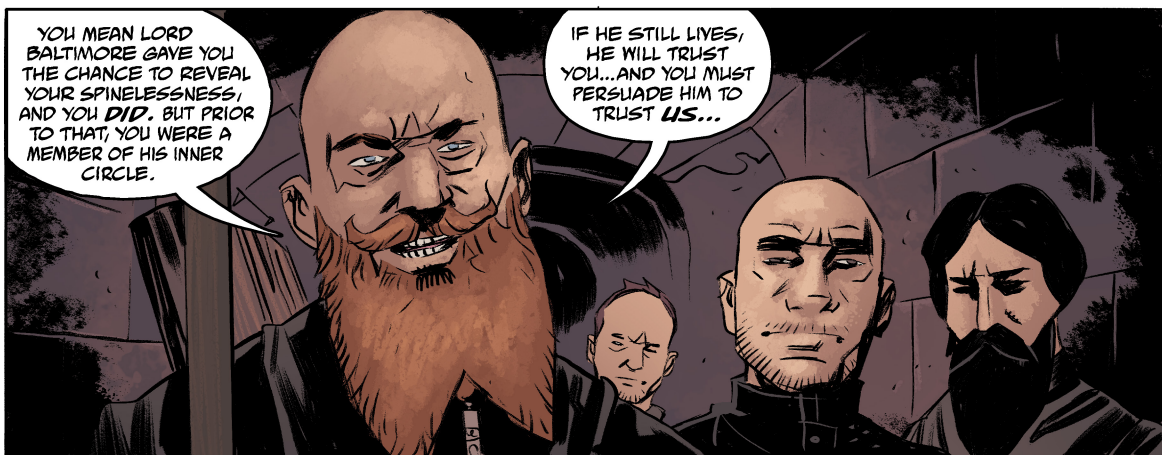
"...I WILL BE
HAPPY ONCE
AGAIN..."

GOOD
FATHERS,
HOW CAN
I HELP
YOU?



...BUT IT IS TIME FOR HIM TO RETURN TO OUR RANKS.



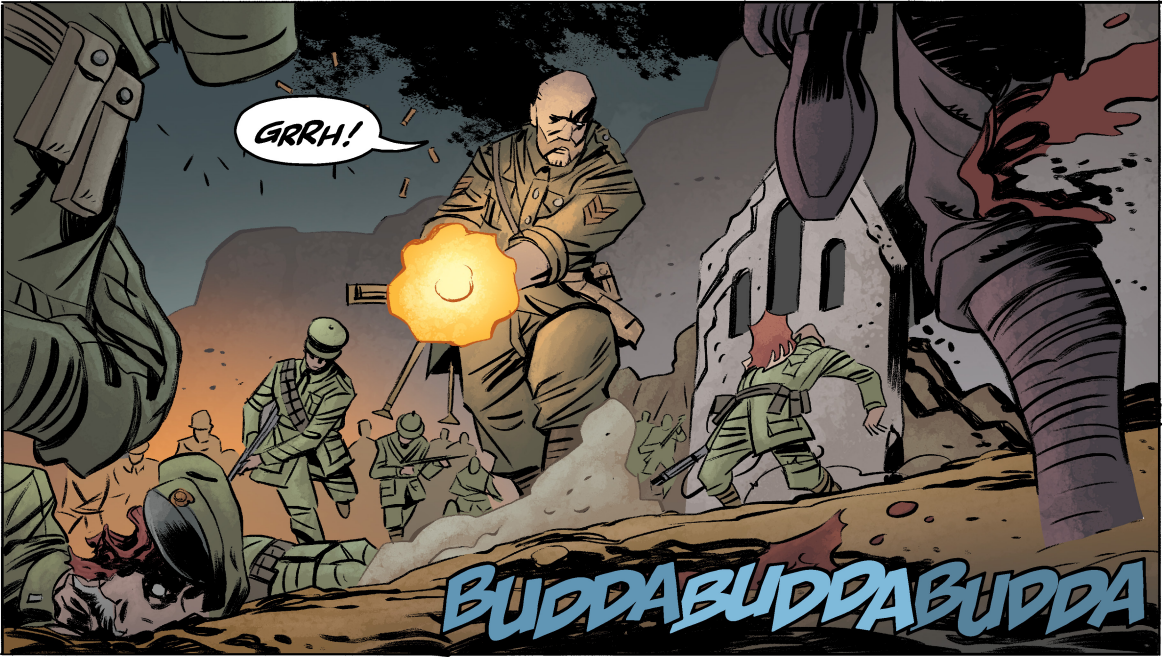


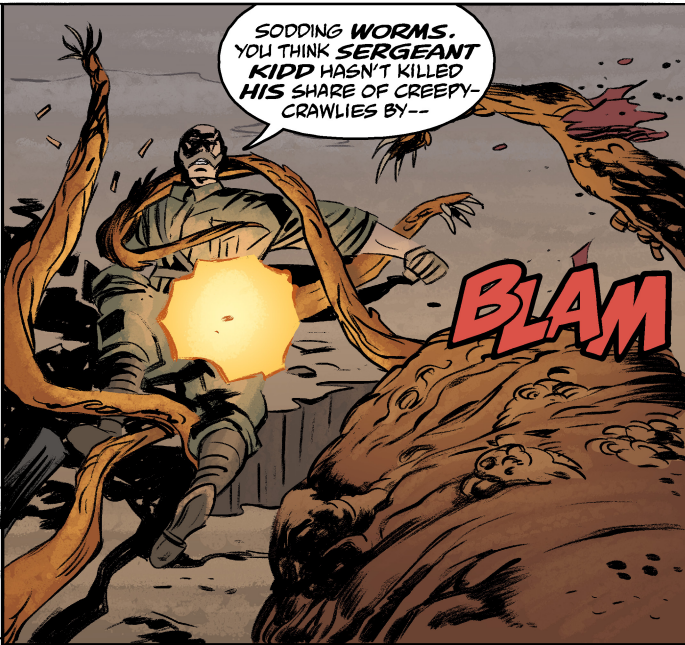
"...THE WAR AGAINST
THE RED KING MAY
DEPEND UPON IT."

ITALY.
JUST SOUTH OF
FLORENCE.



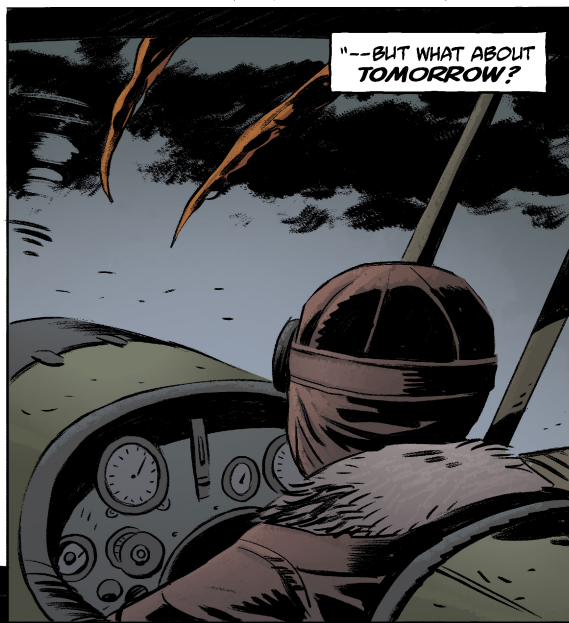
















"A GREAT MANY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED WHILE YOU'VE BEEN HIDING AWAY IN THE MONKS' CELLAR, JUDGE RIGO."



I JOINED A MONASTERY, FATHER ALTHAUS. I'M NOT IN HIDING.



NOT ANYMORE, YOU'RE NOT.



I'M PLEASED TO KNOW THE REST OF YOU CAN SPEAK. I THOUGHT YOUR BISHOP HAD CUT OUT YOUR TONGUES.



ENOUGH BICKERING. JUDGE TYBALT, IF YOU WILL?

HAPPILY.



THE WORLD HAS CHANGED GREATLY IN THE YEARS YOU'VE SPENT HERE, RIGGO. THE RED KING'S INFLUENCE HAS SPREAD FAR AND WIDE THROUGH BOTH CONQUEST AND WORSHIP.



THE GREAT WAR ENDED WHEN THE PLAGUE FIRST ERUPTED AND THE VAMPIRES BEGAN THEIR REIGN... BUT THIS WAR IS SO MUCH WORSE...



"...MOST OF ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE ARE NOW PART OF THE RED KINGDOM. THEIR ARMIES SERVE THE RED KING.



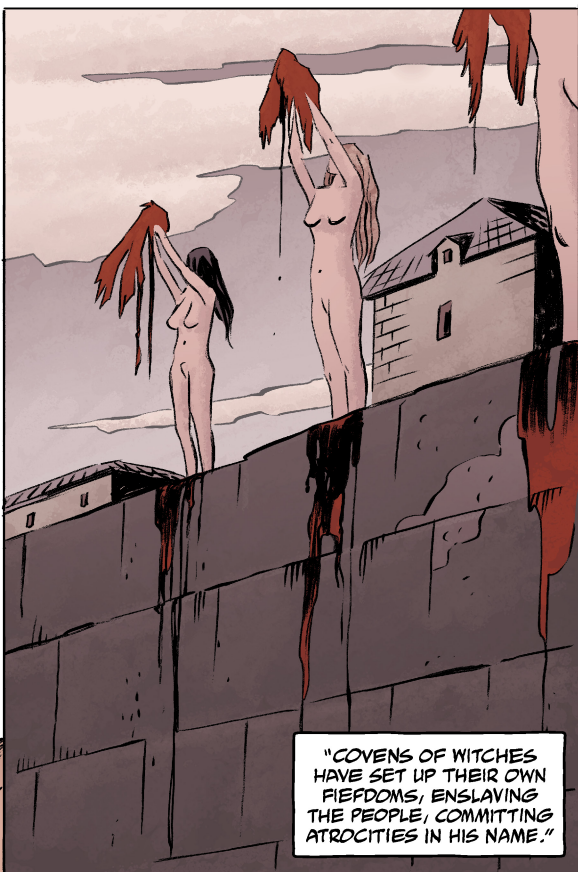
"THE VAMPIRES HAVE BEGUN TO RETURN, BUT THEY ARE ONLY A FRACTION OF THE ENEMY'S FORCES.



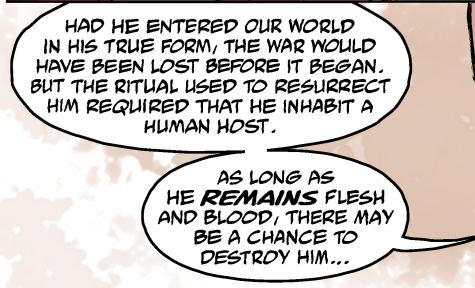
"MONSTERS PROLIFERATE LIKE NEVER BEFORE, TAKING WHOLE CITIES, MERGING WITH THE RED KING'S ARMIES.



"THE CULT OF THE RED KING GROWS BY THE DAY, AND THE MORE CHURCHES SPRING UP, THE MORE POWERFUL HE GROWS."



"COVENS OF WITCHES HAVE SET UP THEIR OWN PIEFDOMS, ENSLAVING THE PEOPLE, COMMITTING ATROCITIES IN HIS NAME."



HAD HE ENTERED OUR WORLD IN HIS TRUE FORM, THE WAR WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST BEFORE IT BEGAN. BUT THE RITUAL USED TO RESURRECT HIM REQUIRED THAT HE INHABIT A HUMAN HOST.

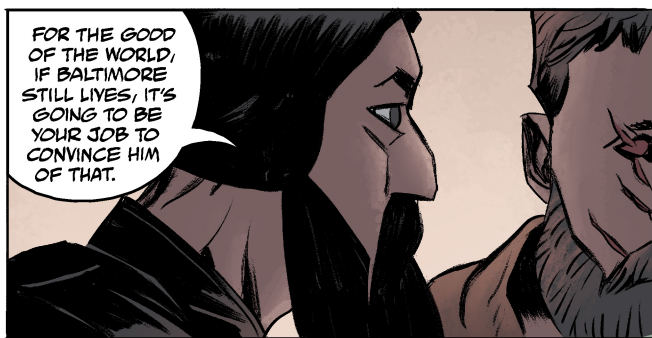
AS LONG AS HE REMAINS FLESH AND BLOOD, THERE MAY BE A CHANCE TO DESTROY HIM...



"...BUT WITH EVERY VICTORY IN HIS NAME, WITH EVERY NIGHT OF WORSHIP..."







"...WE
NEED
HIM TO
TRUST
YOU."

IF YOU DON'T
WANT TO
TALK ABOUT
HIM--

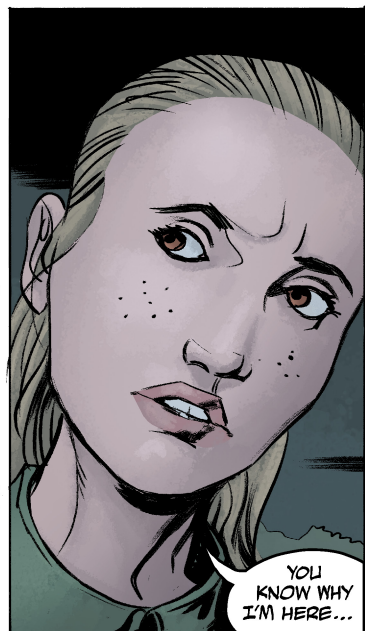
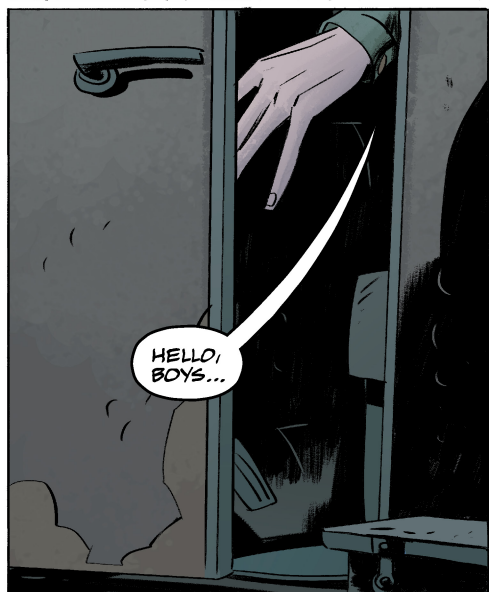
GOT NOTHING TO SAY, HAVE I?
NOBODY'S SEEN BALTIMORE
FOR BETTER THAN TWO YEARS.
WORD HAS IT HE'S DEAD AND
I FIGURE HE MUST BE. MAN
I KNEW WOULD NEVER
HAVE JUST GIVEN UP
THE FIGHT.

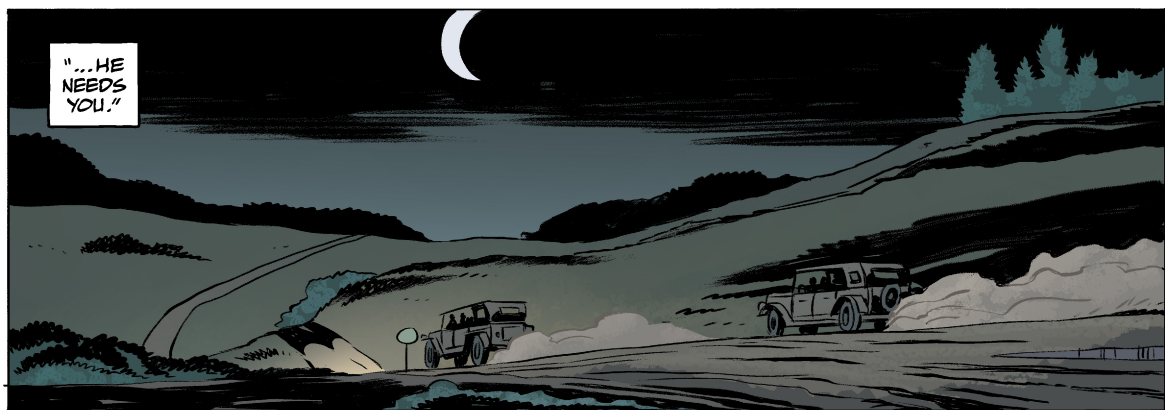
PARDON
ME, HARISH,
BUT THE
CAPTAIN'S ASKED
FOR YOU AND
SERGEANT
KIDD.

BLOODY
HELL, HAVEN'T
WE BEEN SOLDIERS
ENOUGH FOR
TODAY?

IN THIS WAR,
YOU'RE NEVER OFF
DUTY TILL YOU'RE
DEAD.

SO BE IT.
WE KEEP ON
LIKE THIS AND
WE'LL ALL BE "OFF
DUTY" SOON
ENOUGH.





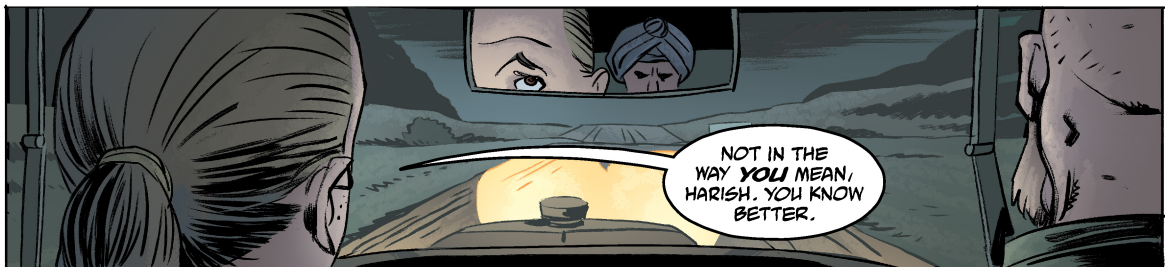
"...HE
NEEDS
YOU."



AFTER A WHILE, HE REALIZED
HE'D NEVER CATCH THE RED
KING IF HE KEPT RELYING ON
ARMY INTELLIGENCE. THE KING
HAD GONE UNDERGROUND,
AND SO BALTIMORE DID
THE SAME--



AND
YOU WITH
HIM.

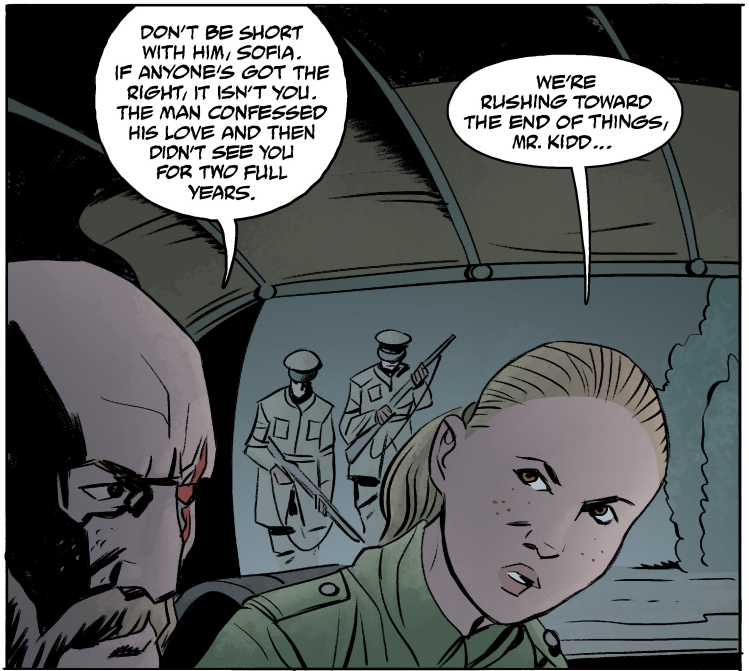


NOT IN THE
WAY **YOU** MEAN,
HARISH. YOU KNOW
BETTER.



DO
I?







...HE
DOES.



THANK
YOU FOR COMING,
MY FRIENDS.
THE MOMENT IS
AT HAND.

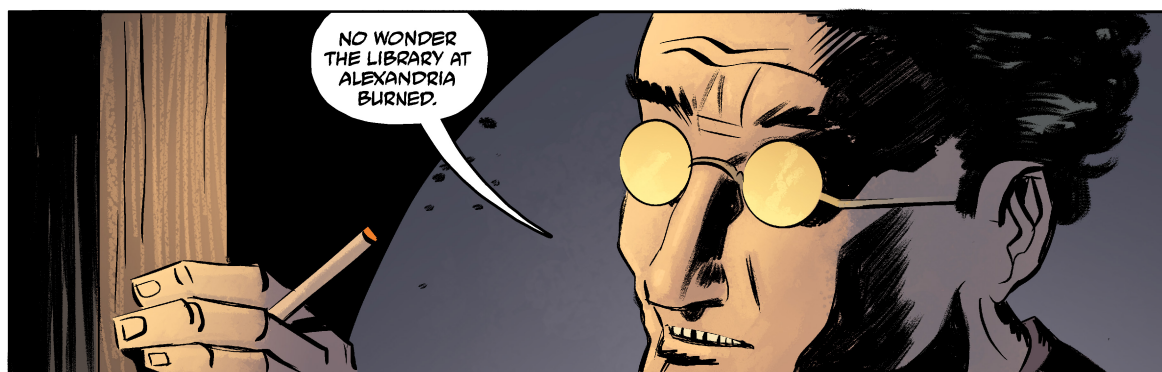
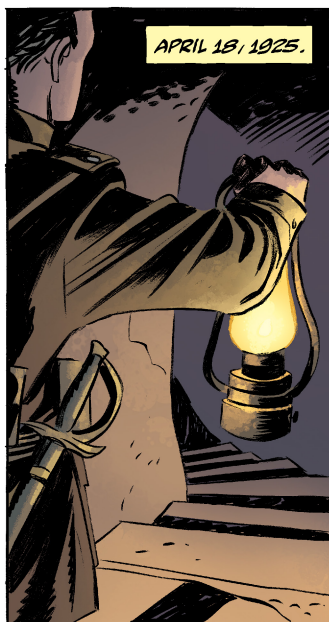
I KNOW
HOW WE CAN
KILL HIM.



IT'S
ABOUT
BLOODY
TIME.

CHAPTER TWO











I AM
SEARCHING
THE **SECRETS OF**
HISTORY FOR EVERY **SCRAP**
OF INFORMATION ON **THE RED**
KING, TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT
WHEN THE **TIME** COMES, WE CAN
SAVE THE BLOODY
WORLD!

AND YOU
HAVE MADE ME
LOSE MY TRAIN OF
THOUGHT!



OUT! GET
OUT!



WELL, **THAT**
WAS RASH. IF YOU
WANT THE REST OF
THE BOOKS BROUGHT
HERE, YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO STOP
TERRIFYING THE
SOLDIERS.

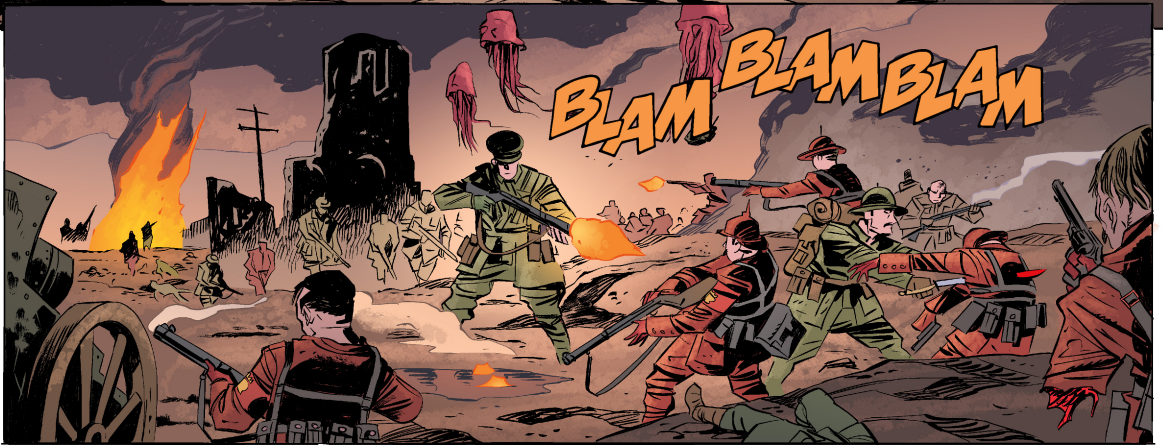
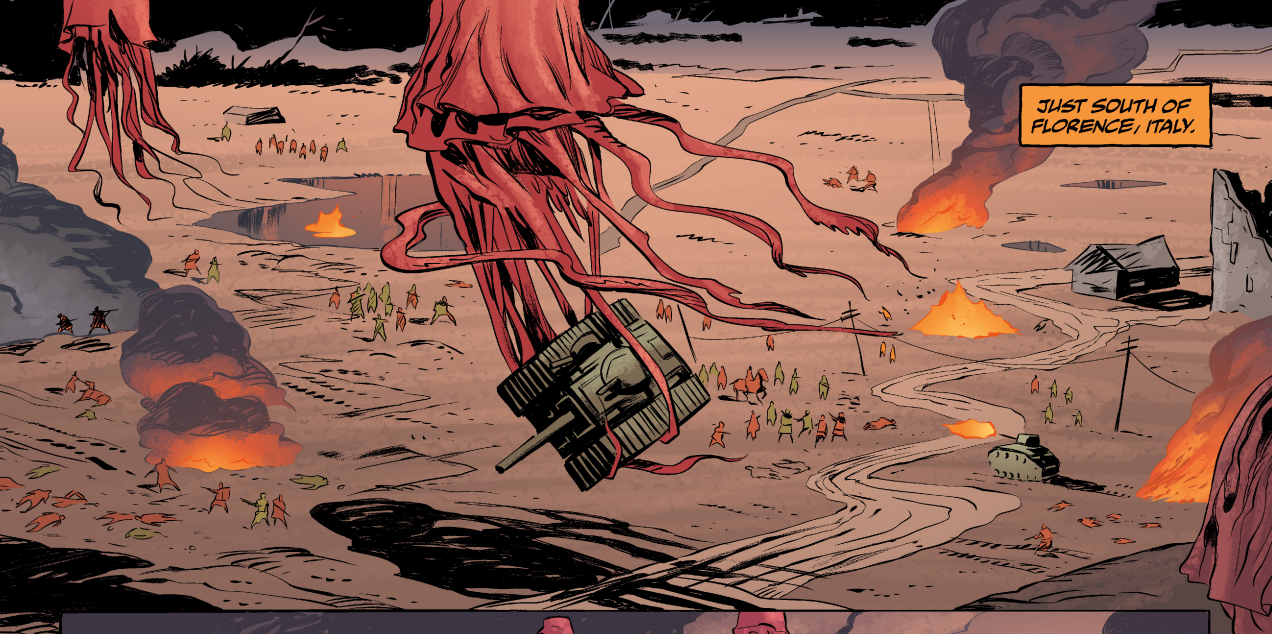


ALSO, I'M NOT
HELPING YOU
PICK UP THE
MESS YOU'VE
MADE.



THE YOUNG
FOOLS
SHOULD BE
TERRIFIED.

REALLY,
IT'S A MINOR
MIRACLE THAT
I HAVEN'T
KILLED **YOU**
YET.







WELL
DONE, DEAR
ONES. THE
KING WILL BE
PROUD.

NOW
GO. FINISH
WHAT YOU'VE
BEGUN.

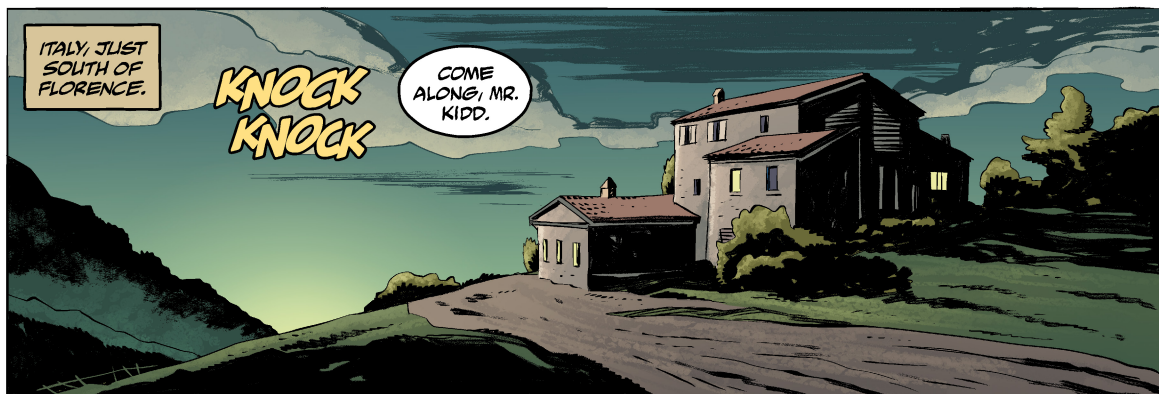


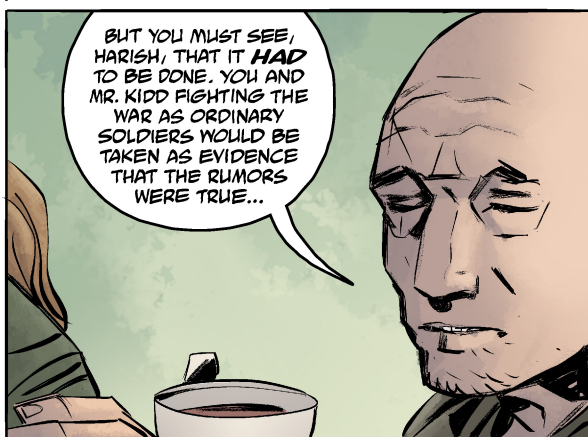
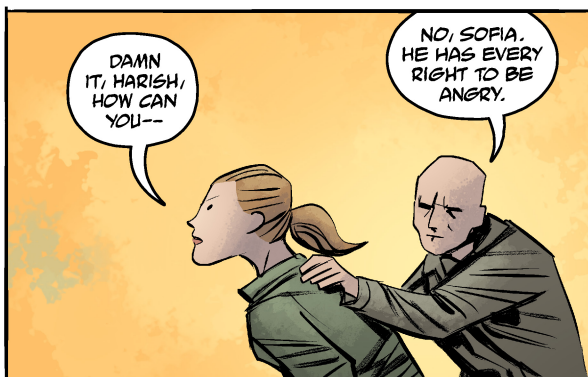
THERE IS
NO VICTORY UNTIL
ALL OF OUR LORD'S
ENEMIES HAVE
KNELT TO WORSHIP
HIM.



THERE
SHALL BE NO
OTHER GODS
ABOVE
HIM.









"...AND WHILE THOSE RUMORS SPREAD, SOFIA AND I HAVE WORKED QUIETLY..."



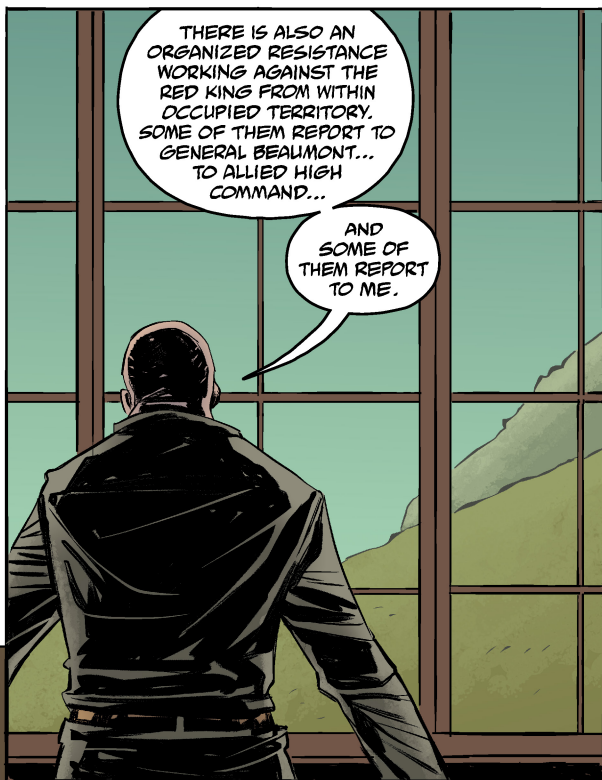
"...BUILDING A NETWORK OF INFORMERS WITHIN THE RED KINGDOM..."



"...SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS, WITCHES...PEOPLE WHO HAD HAILED THE KING'S RISE..."

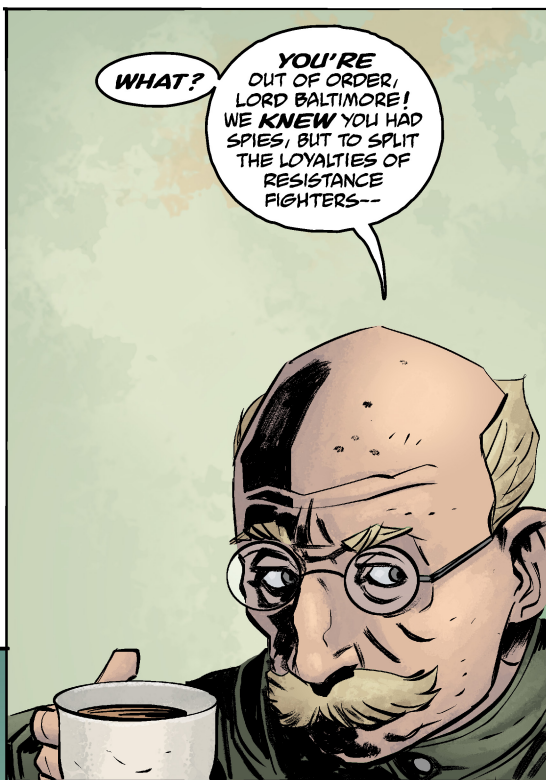


"...BUT NOW REALIZE THERE'S NO PLACE FOR HUMANITY IN THE WORLD HE ENVISONS..."



THERE IS ALSO AN ORGANIZED RESISTANCE WORKING AGAINST THE RED KING FROM WITHIN OCCUPIED TERRITORY. SOME OF THEM REPORT TO GENERAL BEAUMONT... TO ALLIED HIGH COMMAND...

AND SOME OF THEM REPORT TO ME.



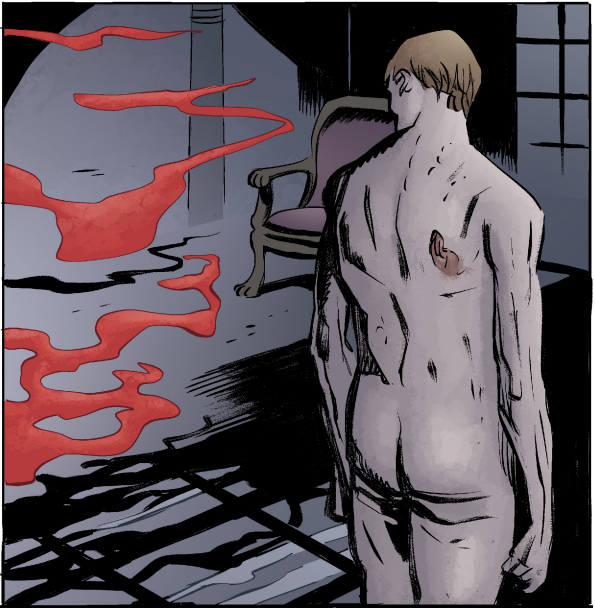
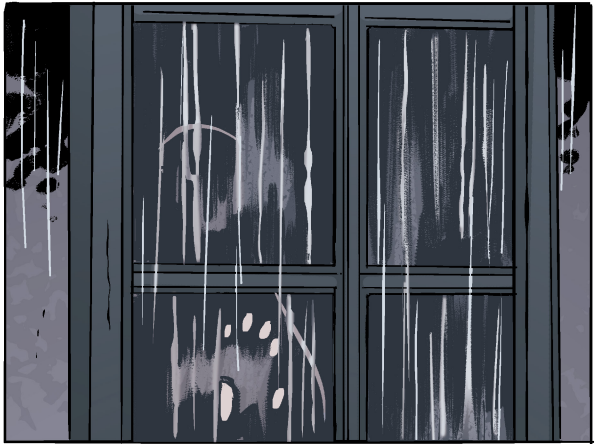
WHAT?

YOU'RE OUT OF ORDER, LORD BALTIMORE! WE *KNEW* YOU HAD SPIES, BUT TO SPLIT THE LOYALTIES OF RESISTANCE FIGHTERS--



WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE OF THIS WAR, GENERAL. YES, I'VE KEPT THINGS FROM YOU-- WOULDNT YOU LIKE TO HEAR WHAT MY SPIES HAVE DISCOVERED?

WOULDNT YOU LIKE TO KNOW HOW WE CAN WIN?





YOU!



WHERE
IN HELL
HAVE YOU
BEEN?

WHUD



CALM YOURSELF,
MAJESTY. I BRING
GREAT TIDINGS...THE
VICTORY FOR WHICH
YOU HAVE BEEN
SO EAGER.

ROME
BELONGS TO
YOU. IT WILL
BE THE SEAT
OF YOUR
EMPIRE.



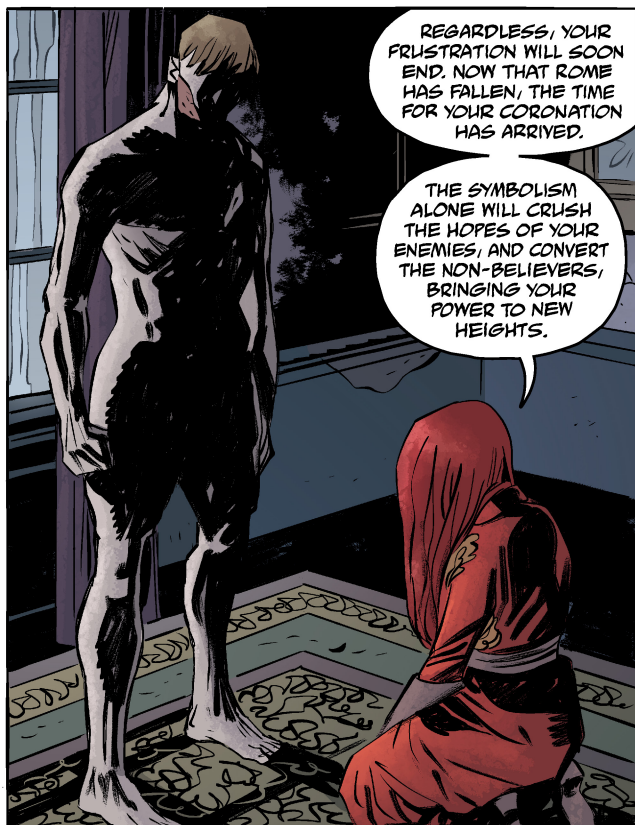
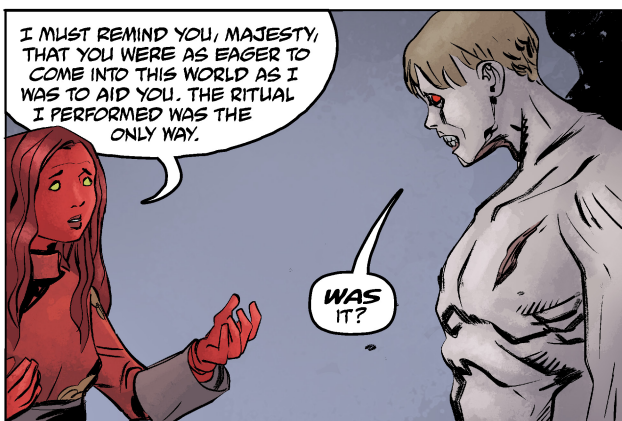
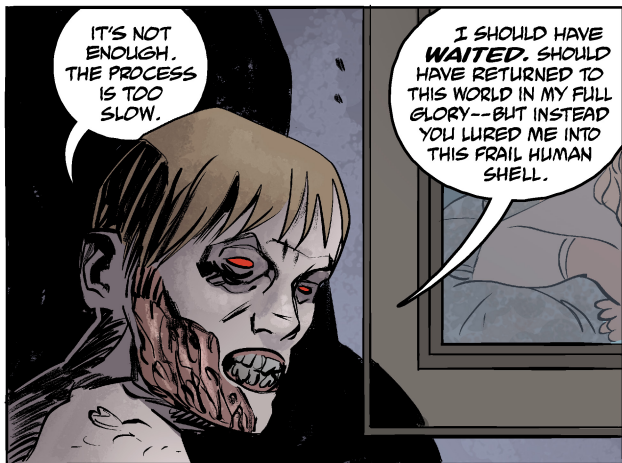
A SEAT YOU TELL ME
I CANNOT OCCUPY...
AND YET YOU TRAVEL
FAR AND WIDE AT
WILL.

IT IS ONLY A MATTER
OF TIME BEFORE YOU
CAN WALK FREELY,
WITHOUT FEAR FOR
YOUR SAFETY.



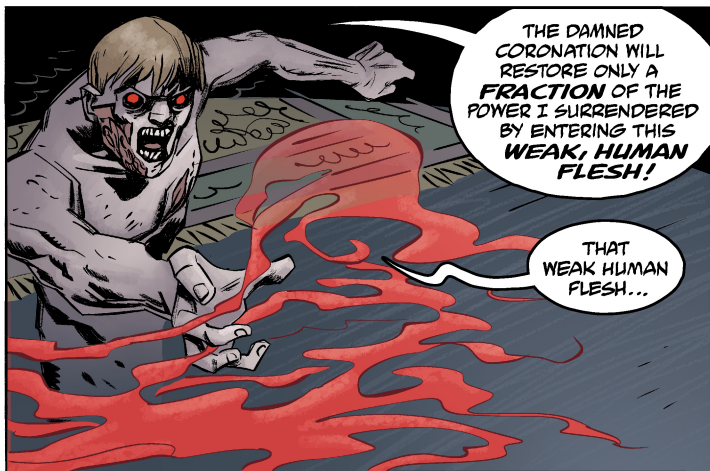
DO YOU **HEAR**
YOURSELF, WOMAN?
YOU'VE JUST
SUGGESTED THAT
I--THAT I--AM
CAPABLE OF
FEAR.

YOU HAVE GIVEN
ME **SO** MANY
REASONS TO KILL
YOU...AND YET HERE
YOU STAND. I REQUIRE
YOUR AID. AND IT
DISGUSTS
ME.



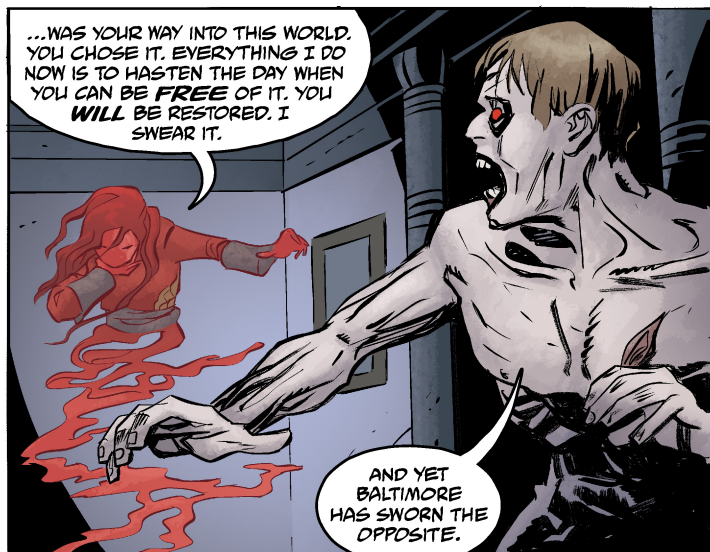


YOU TALK AND TALK,
PRATTLING ON TO
DISTRACT ME FROM MY
RESENTMENT...AND MY
MISTRUST...



THE DAMNED
CORONATION WILL
RESTORE ONLY A
FRACTION OF THE
POWER I SURRENDERED
BY ENTERING THIS
**WEAK, HUMAN
FLESH!**

THAT
WEAK HUMAN
FLESH...



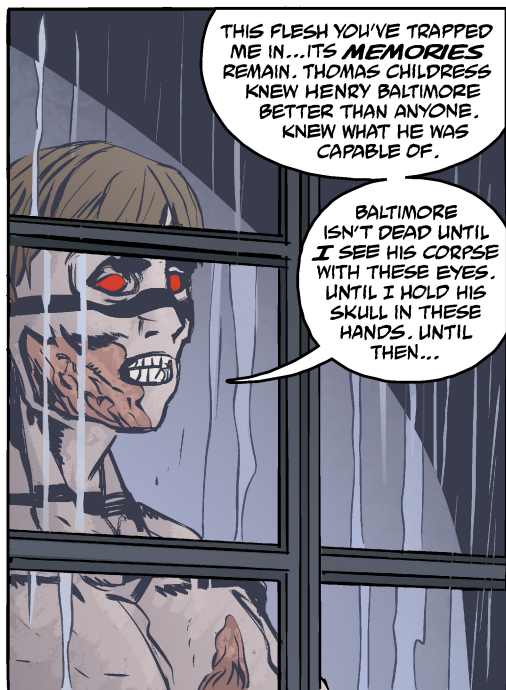
...WAS YOUR WAY INTO THIS WORLD.
YOU CHOSE IT. EVERYTHING I DO
NOW IS TO HASTEN THE DAY WHEN
YOU CAN BE **FREE** OF IT. YOU
WILL BE RESTORED. I
SWEAR IT.

AND YET
BALTIMORE
HAS SWORN THE
OPPOSITE.



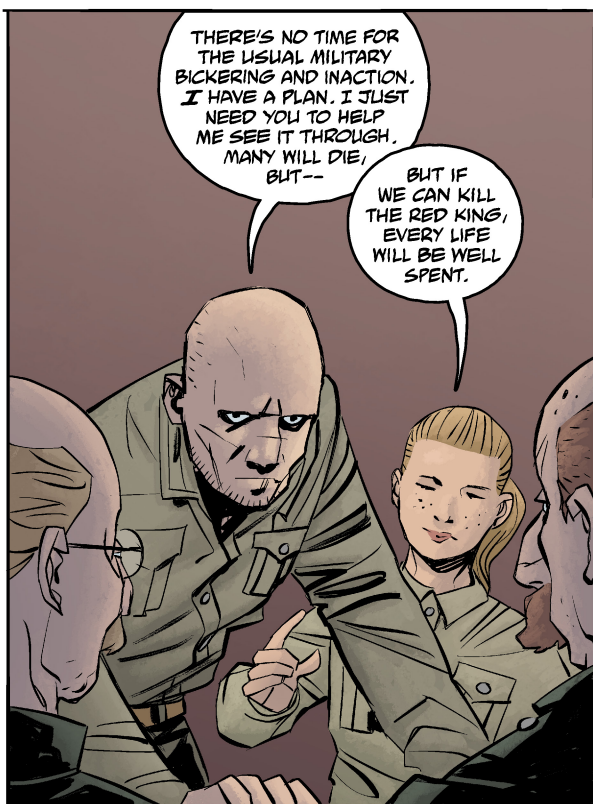
AGAIN WITH BALTIMORE!
IT'S BEEN NEARLY TWO
YEARS SINCE ANYONE HAS
SEEN HIM! IF HE **WERE**
STILL ALIVE, HE'D NEVER
HAVE GIVEN UP TRYING
TO KILL YOU.

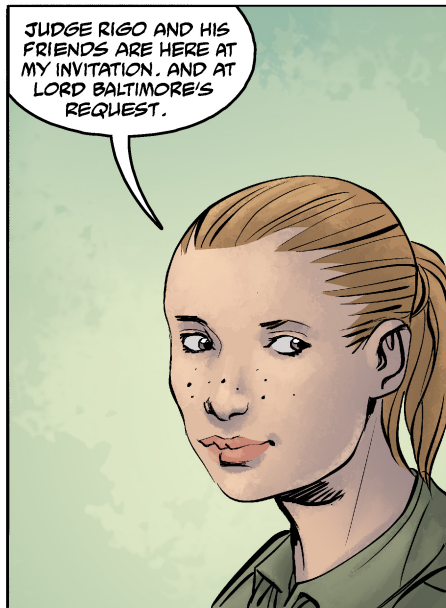
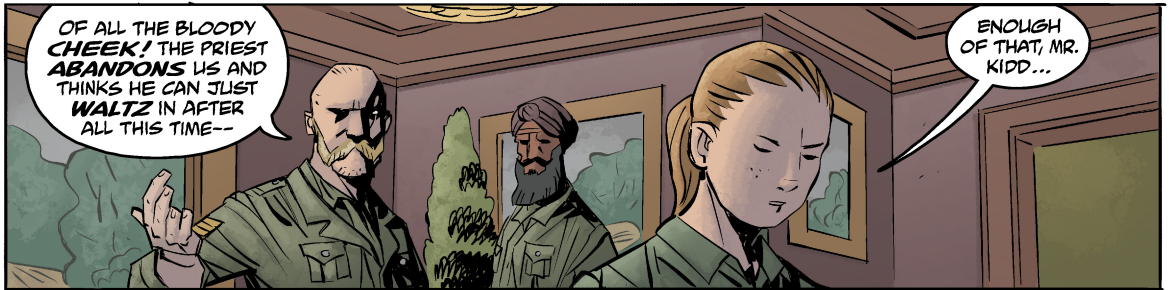
IT'S WHAT
HE WAS
FORGED
TO DO!

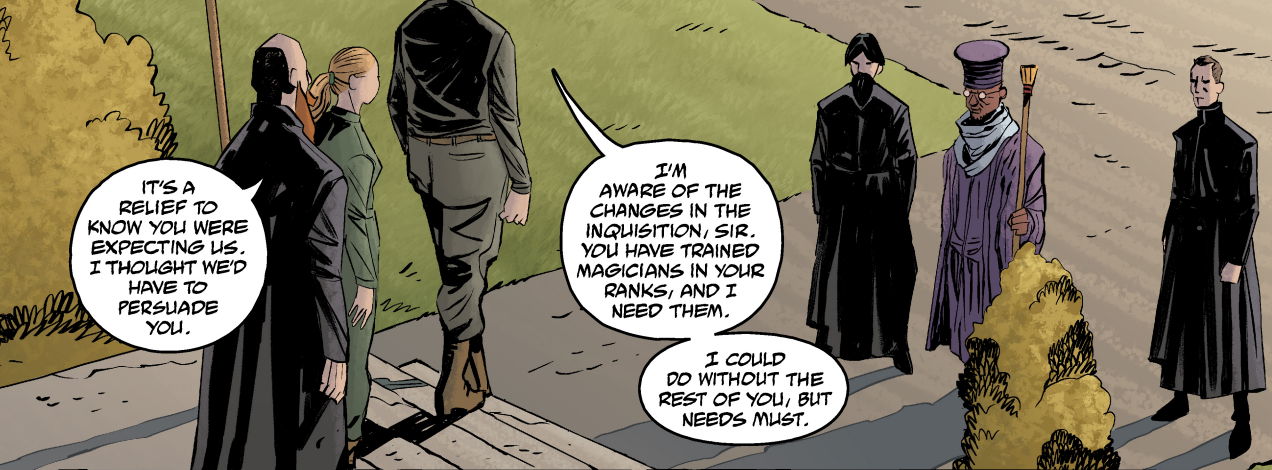


THIS FLESH YOU'VE TRAPPED
ME IN...ITS **MEMORIES**
REMAIN. THOMAS CHILDRESS
KNEW HENRY BALTIMORE
BETTER THAN ANYONE.
KNEW WHAT HE WAS
CAPABLE OF.

BALTIMORE
ISN'T DEAD UNTIL
I SEE HIS CORPSE
WITH THESE EYES.
UNTIL I HOLD HIS
SKULL IN THESE
HANDS. UNTIL
THEN...







IT'S A RELIEF TO KNOW YOU WERE EXPECTING US. I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE TO PERSUADE YOU.

I'M AWARE OF THE CHANGES IN THE INQUISITION, SIR. YOU HAVE TRAINED MAGICIANS IN YOUR RANKS, AND I NEED THEM.

I COULD DO WITHOUT THE REST OF YOU, BUT NEEDS MUST.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. BALTIMORE HATES THE INQUISITION. TORTURERS AND MURDERERS OF CHILDREN. WHY WOULD HE SUMMON YOU?



LORD BALTIMORE, MAY I PRESENT BROTHER GERHARDT, BROTHER KIRCHER, AND FATHER ETEFLI.

TOGETHER, WE JUST MIGHT SAVE THE WORLD.



SOME AMONG US **HAVE** DONE MONSTROUS THINGS.

I'VE NEVER DENIED IT. IT'S WHY I JOINED BALTIMORE TO BEGIN WITH. BUT LET'S NOT FORGET... THE INQUISITION HATES HIM IN RETURN.



"...WE NEED ONE ANOTHER."

YOU MAY BE RIGHT, JUDGE ALTHAUS. I SUPPOSE THE REAL QUESTION IS... **CAN** WE WORK TOGETHER?





NO! IT CANNOT BE!

THEY DIDN'T WARN YOU, DID THEY, ASSASSIN? THE SERVANTS OF THE RED KING WHO SET THIS TASK BEFORE YOU?



BLAM



I KNEW THEY COULDN'T BE TRUSTED!

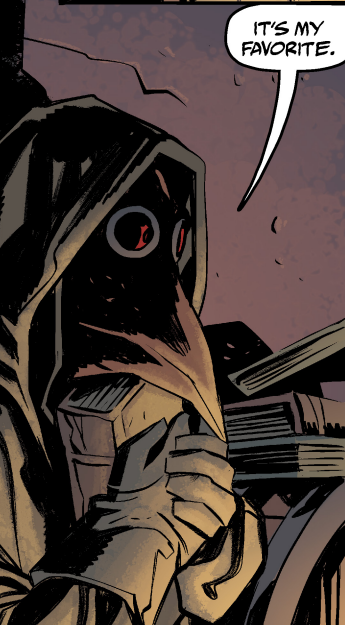
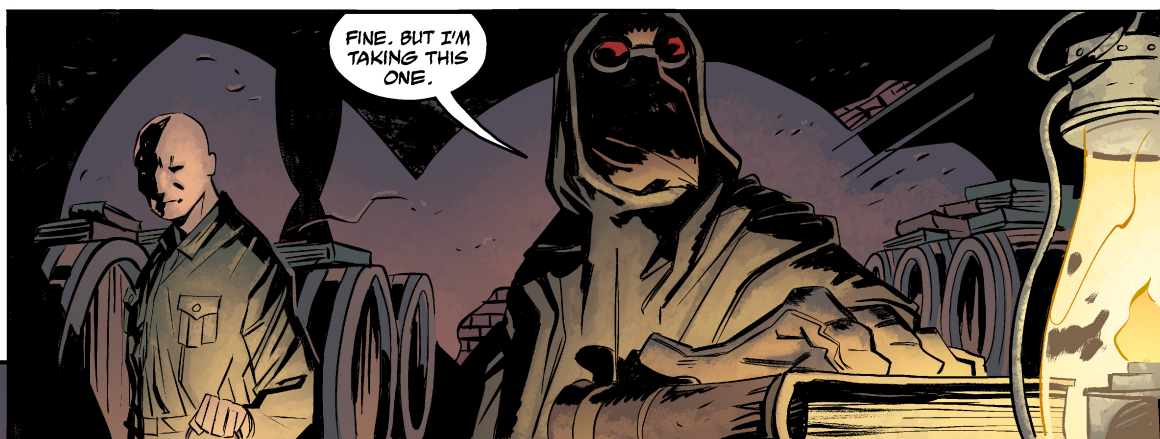
NO ONE CAN BE TRUSTED, MR. KIDD.

HARD TO BELIEVE KIRCHER WAS WORKING FOR THE RED KING, BUT IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION. I WISH WE COULD HAVE INTERROGATED HIM.

I'M NOT SURE HE COULD HAVE TOLD US MUCH WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW. BESIDES, I PREFER A MAGICIAN TO BE EITHER ON MY SIDE...OR DEAD.









MY LORD, YOU CAN'T...IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!

NO! YOU IDIOT!

DON'T TOUCH HIM!



URHK!



PLEASE, GOD...DON'T LET IT TOUCH ME...



TSK. POOR LAD. TOO YOUNG TO DIE.



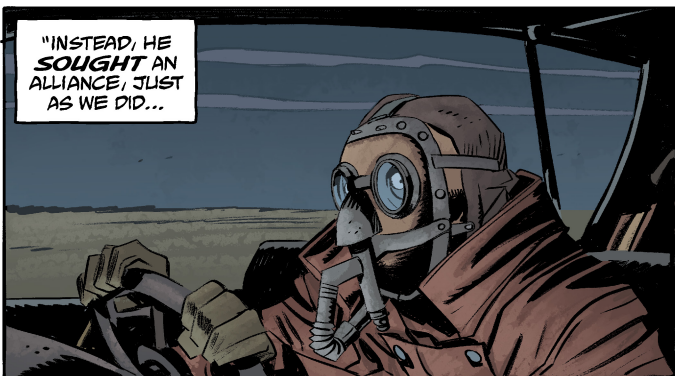
AREN'T THEY ALL?

CHAPTER THREE

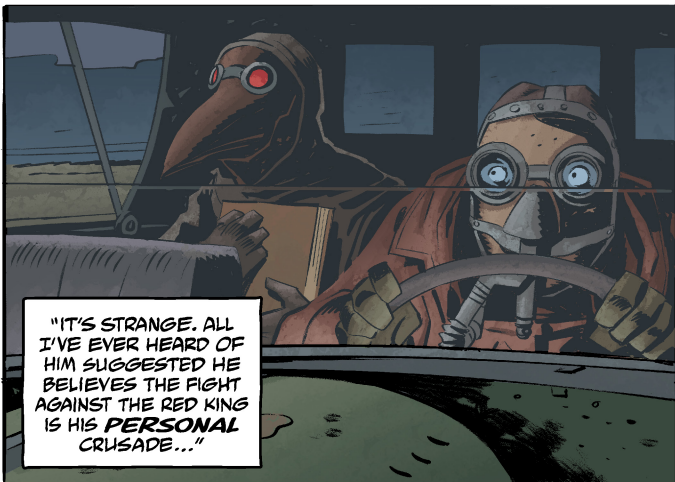




"GIVEN HIS PAST **HATRED** OF THE INQUISITION, I THOUGHT WE WOULD HAVE TO PERSUADE LORD BALTIMORE TO WORK WITH US...



"INSTEAD, HE **SOUGHT** AN ALLIANCE, JUST AS WE DID...

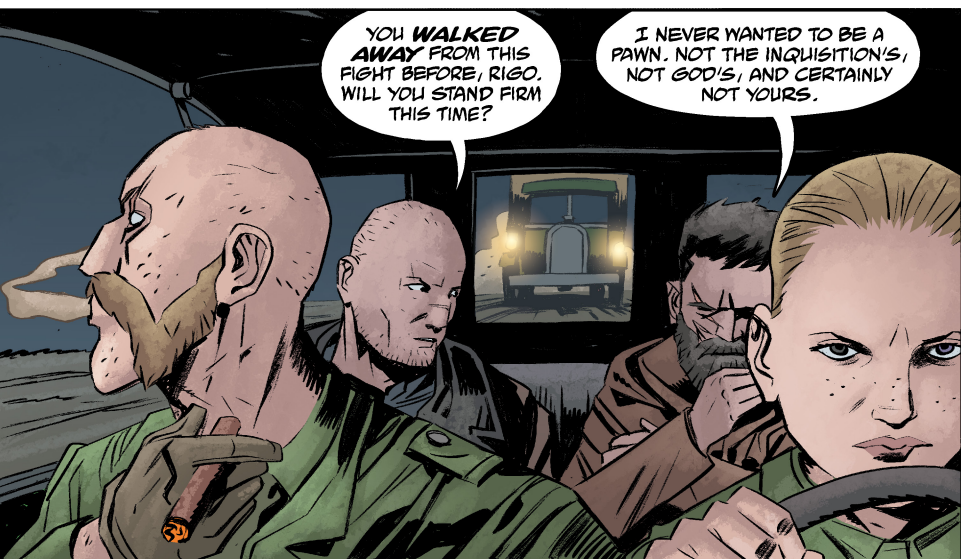


"IT'S STRANGE. ALL I'VE EVER HEARD OF HIM SUGGESTED HE BELIEVES THE FIGHT AGAINST THE RED KING IS HIS **PERSONAL** CRUSADE..."



...A MISSION FOR HIMSELF ALONE.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, BROTHER TYBALT. THIS IS BALTIMORE'S CRUSADE, BUT HE HAS ALWAYS MADE USE OF WHATEVER WEAPONS WERE AVAILABLE. HE HAS MERELY ADDED YOUR PEOPLE TO HIS ARSENAL.

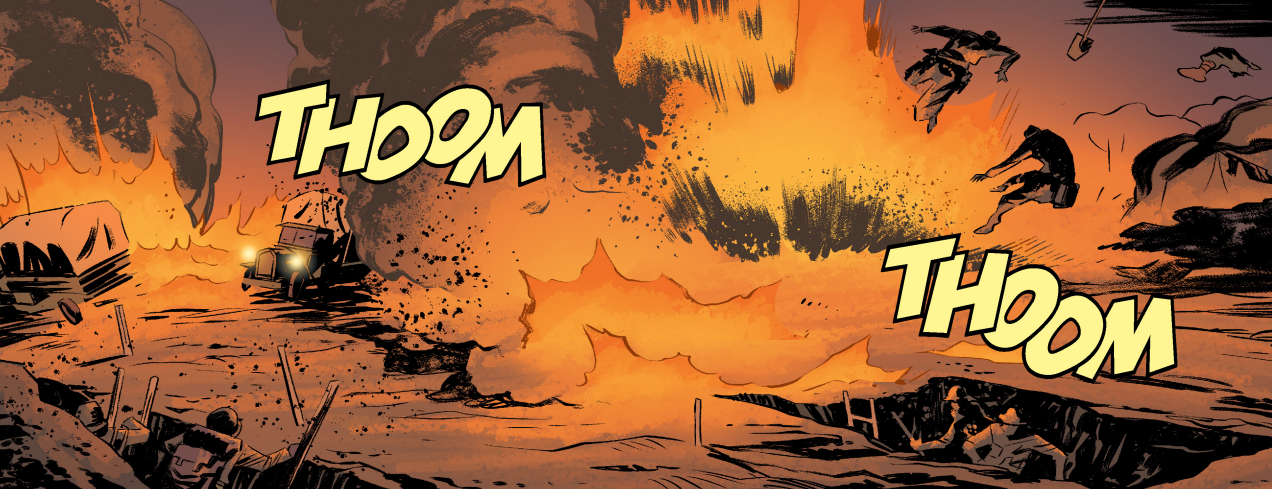


YOU **WALKED AWAY** FROM THIS FIGHT BEFORE, RIGO. WILL YOU STAND FIRM THIS TIME?

I NEVER WANTED TO BE A PAWN. NOT THE INQUISITION'S, NOT GOD'S, AND CERTAINLY NOT YOURS.



WE'RE **ALL** PAWNS, YOU FOOL. NONE MORE SO THAN MYSELF.



THOOM

THOOM



SKREECH



BOOOM

TAKE COVER, HARISH!

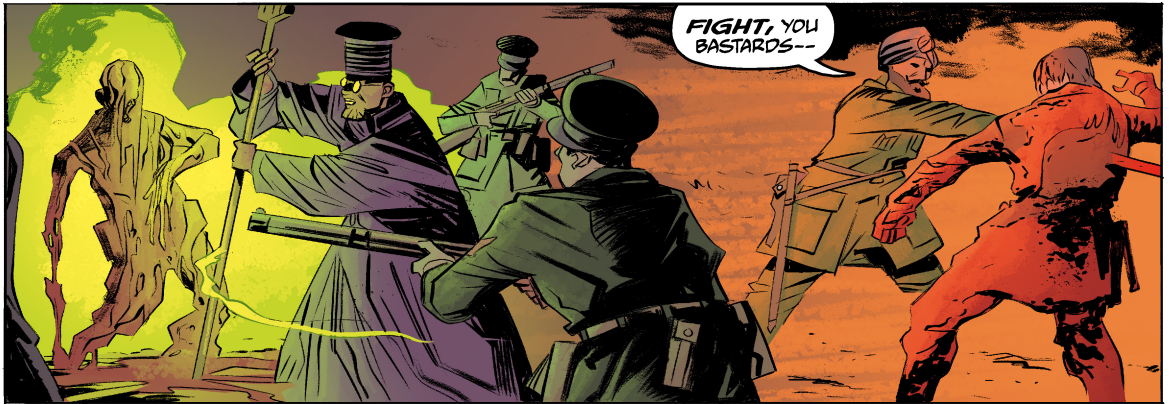
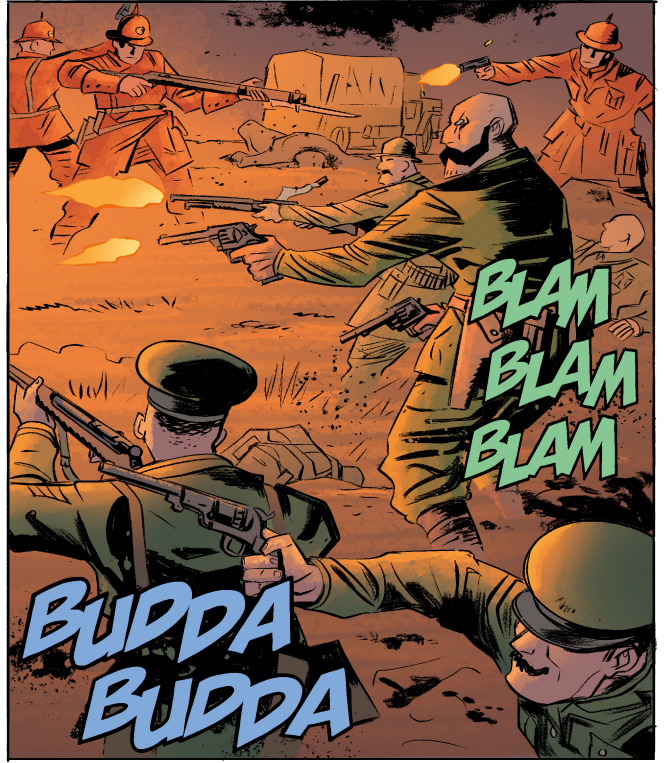
THAT ISN'T WHAT WE DO.

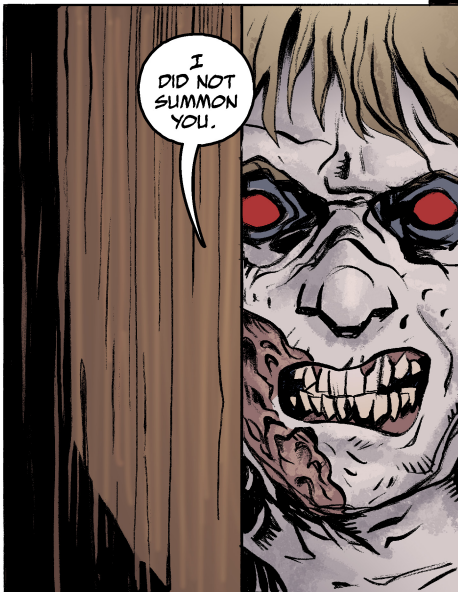
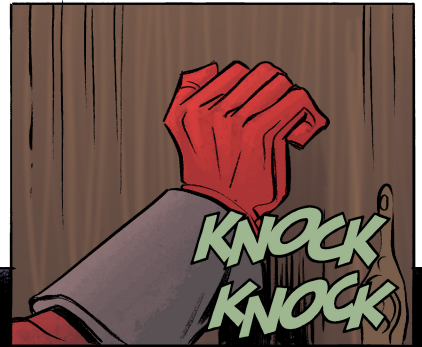


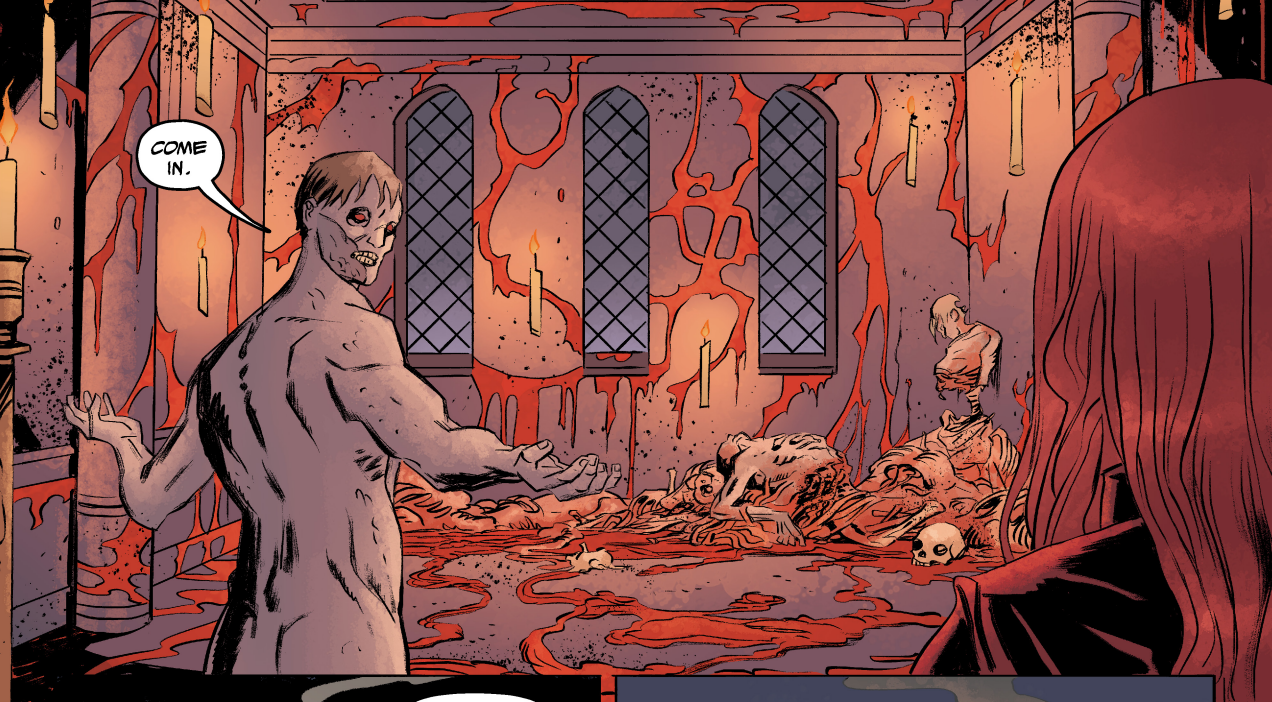
NO! YOU CAN'T REVEAL YOURSELF. WE CAN'T RISK THE RED KING KNOWING THAT YOU'RE ALIVE!

LET GO OF ME, JUDGE RIGO.











IF I COULD LURE THEM BACK TO THE WORLD, I WOULD GAIN THE STRENGTH TO BREAK FREE OF THIS FLESH, TO BE **RESTORED TO GLORY.**

BUT THEY DO NOT ANSWER.



COULD IT BE THAT THEY **CANNOT** ANSWER? PERHAPS THEY ARE TRULY GONE FOREVER.

DEAD? NO, THEY'RE STILL THERE, OUT BEYOND THE VEIL OF THE WORLD. I KNOW THEY HEAR ME. ONCE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE **DARED** TO DEFY ME. NOW THEY SIMPLY IGNORE ME.



I HAVE LOST MY PLACE AMONG THE GODS, AND YOU ARE TO BLAME.

YOU SAY IN TIME I WILL BE ABLE TO **SHED** THIS FLESH, TO BECOME MYSELF AGAIN, AND FULFILL MY PLAN FOR THIS WORLD--



YOU **WILL**, MAJESTY. I SWEAR I WON'T REST UNTIL THAT DAY, AND **UNTIL** THEN, IF YOU **HAVE** LOST YOUR ROLE AMONG GODS, THEN YOU WILL LIVE AS A GOD AMONG MEN.

I AM NOT A MAN.



YOU HAVE TO TRUST ME.

FOR NOW, WITCH.

FOR NOW.





MY FRIENDS...IF WE'RE TO BE THROWN TOGETHER AGAIN, IT SEEMS THERE'S A CONVERSATION WE OUGHT TO HAVE.

IS THERE?

YOU DON'T TRUST ME. AND WHY WOULD YOU? I WALKED AWAY FROM THIS CRUSADE ONCE BEFORE. BUT LET'S NOT FORGET THAT BALTIMORE LET YOU BELIEVE HIM DEAD FOR TWO YEARS.

TO HIM, YOU'RE DISPENSABLE. USEFUL WHEN HE NEEDS YOU, CAST OFF WHEN HE DOES NOT.



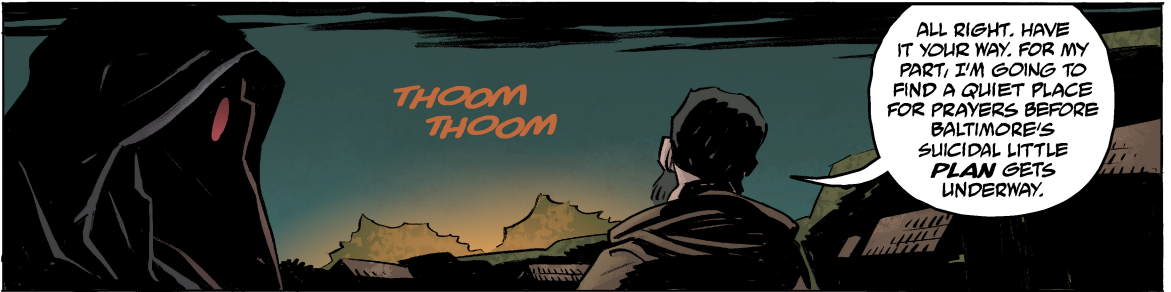
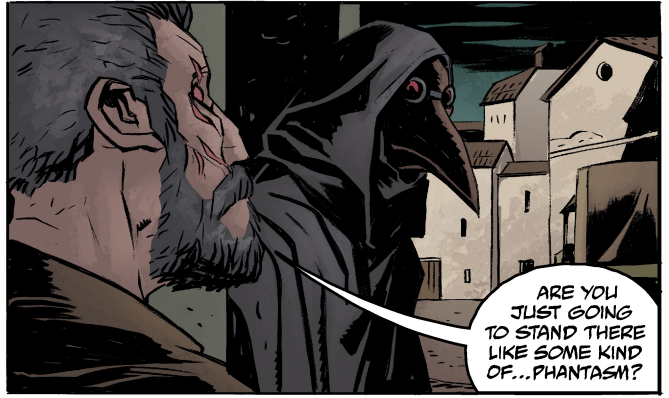
WE'RE ALL HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE. TO DESTROY THE RED KING. WE SERVE THE MISSION.

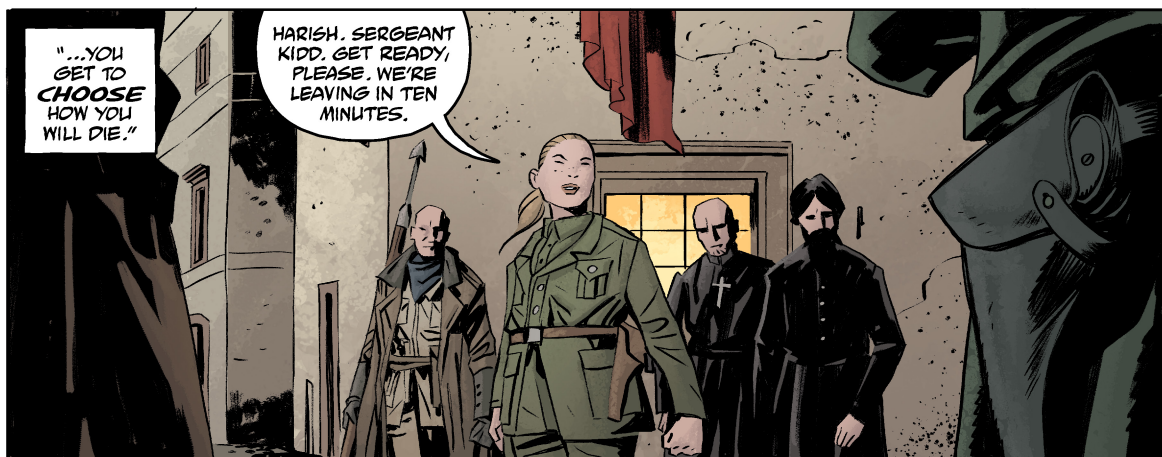
ISN'T THAT THE SAME THING GOD ASKS OF YOU, FATHER RIGO? TO SERVE A HIGHER PURPOSE?

YOU KNOW WHAT? MAYBE WE DIDN'T NEED TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION AFTER ALL.

I HOPE YOU SURVIVE YOUR MISSION, GENTLEMEN. I HOPE WE ALL DO.

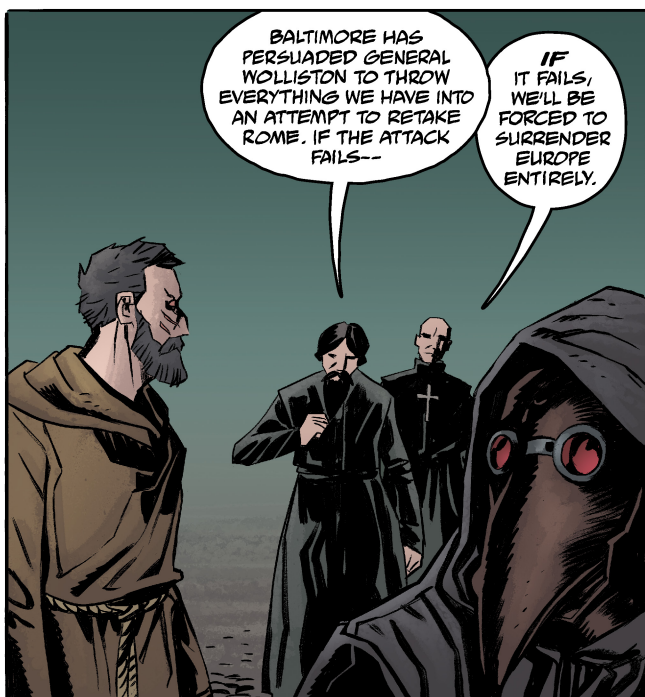






"...YOU
GET TO
CHOOSE
HOW YOU
WILL DIE."

HARISH. SERGEANT
KIDD. GET READY,
PLEASE. WE'RE
LEAVING IN TEN
MINUTES.



BALTIMORE HAS
PERSUADED GENERAL
WOLLISTON TO THROW
EVERYTHING WE HAVE INTO
AN ATTEMPT TO RETAKE
ROME. IF THE ATTACK
FAILS---

IF
IT FAILS,
WE'LL BE
FORCED TO
SURRENDER
EUROPE
ENTIRELY.



PERHAPS
WE SHOULD
NOT COOPERATE.
WE HAD PLANS OF
OUR OWN, ONCE.
MAYBE THERE'S
ANOTHER
WAY.



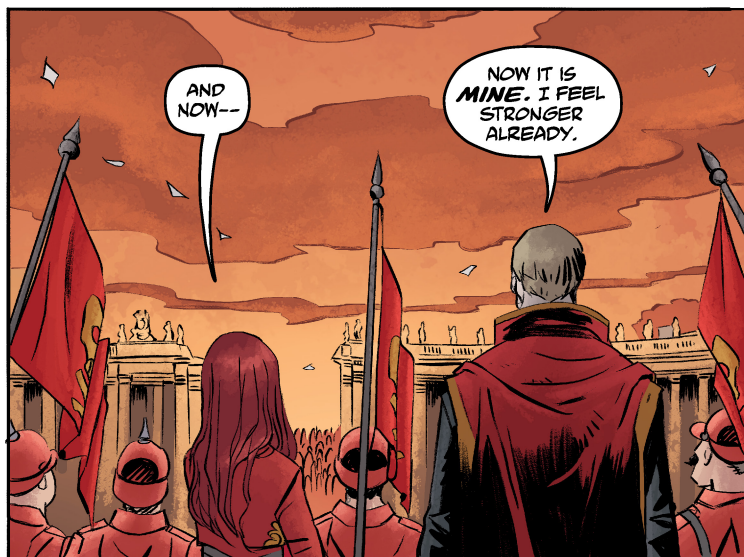
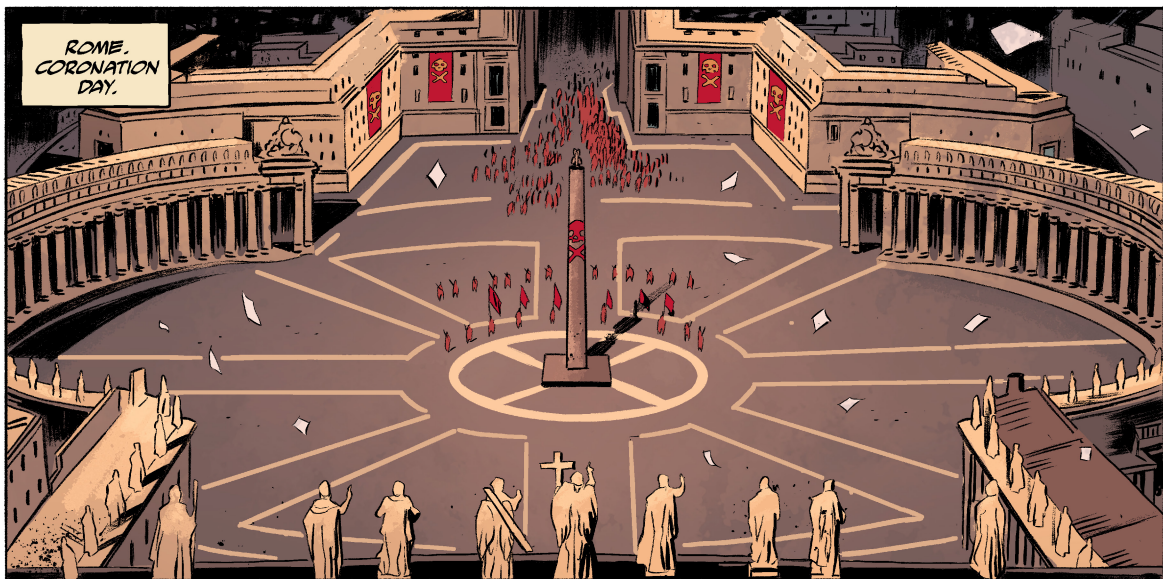
NO. WHATEVER BALTIMORE
HAS IN MIND, THIS WILL ONLY
BE ONE LAYER OF IT. HE'S
BEEN PUTTING THE
PIECES IN PLACE FOR
TWO YEARS.

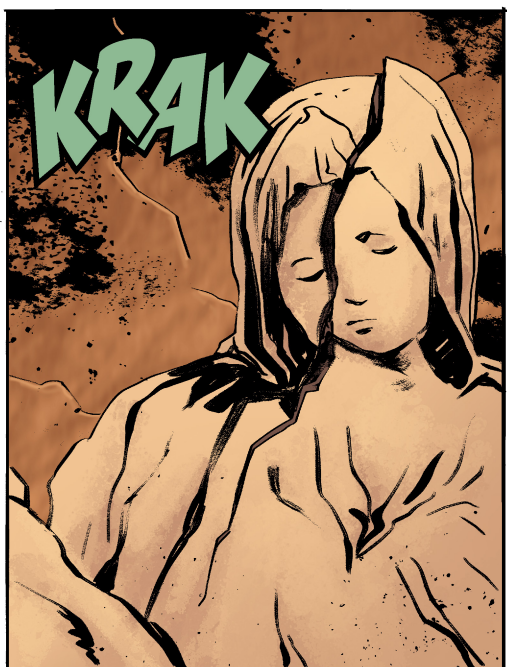
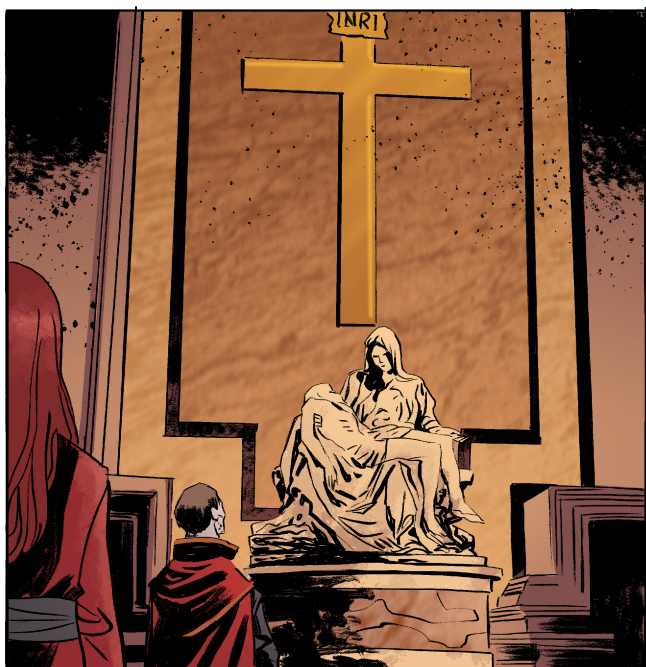
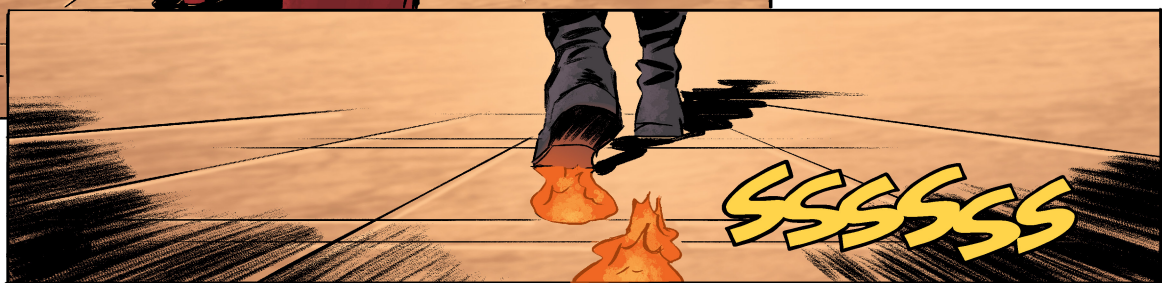
FOR
BETTER OR
WORSE, WE HAVE
TO PLAY OUR PART AS
HE'S WRITTEN
IT.



ONE
WAY OR
ANOTHER,
THIS WILL BE
THE END OF
THINGS.



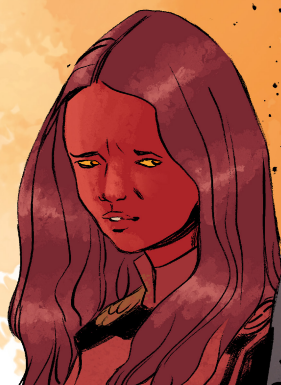


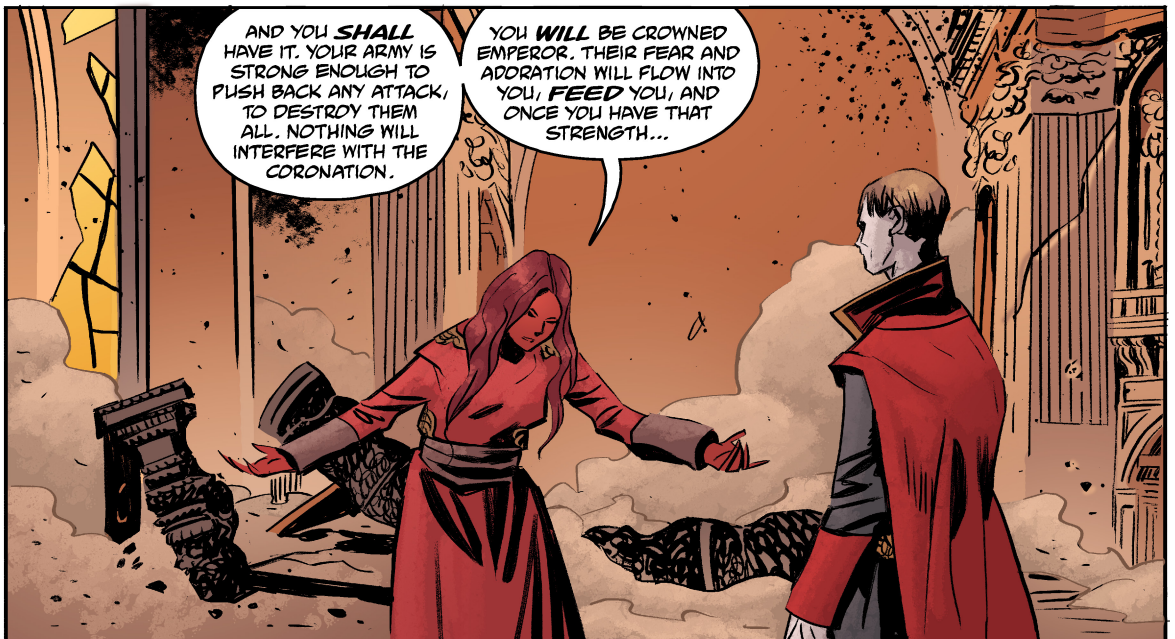
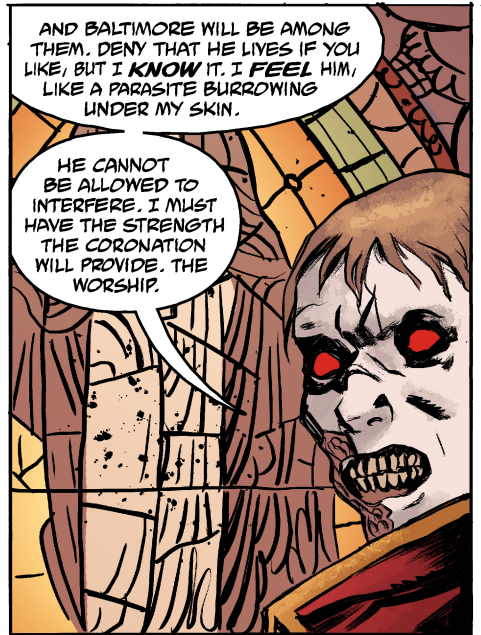
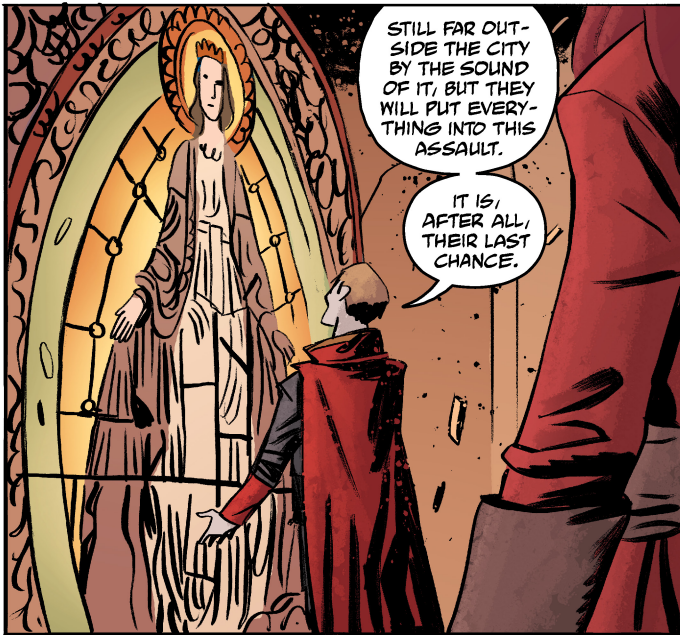
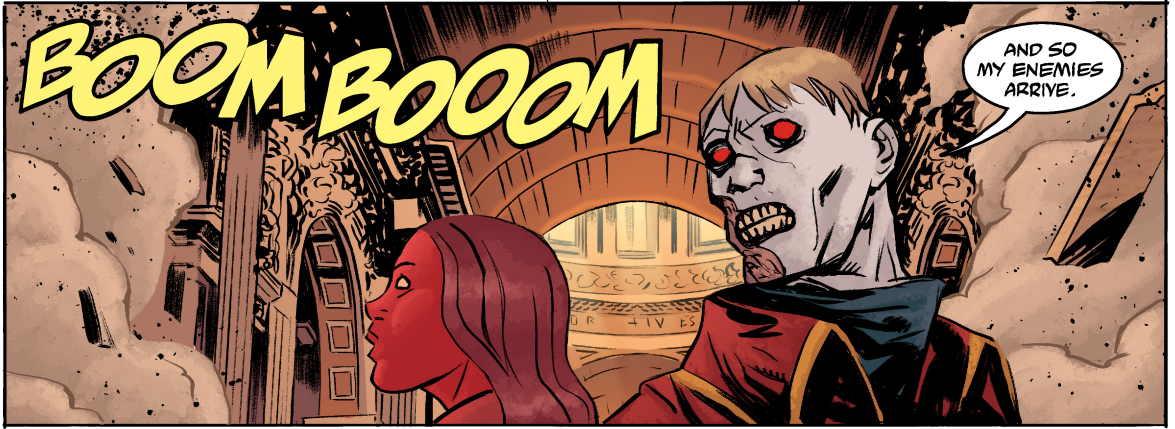




AS I PROMISED, YOU HAVE PUT YOURSELF IN MY HANDS AND I WILL NOT DISAPPOINT YOU.

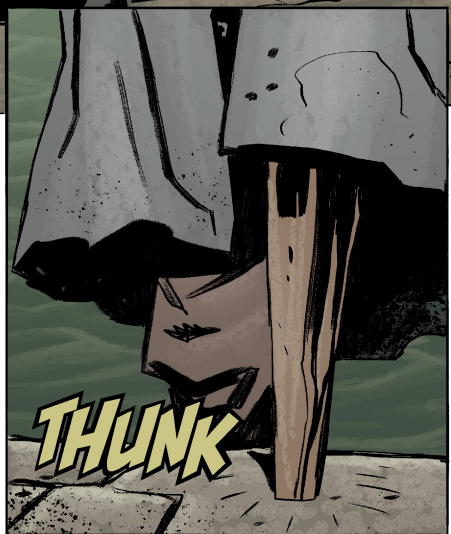
I SWEAR, YOU WILL NOT BE IN THIS FLESH FOREVER. I WILL--



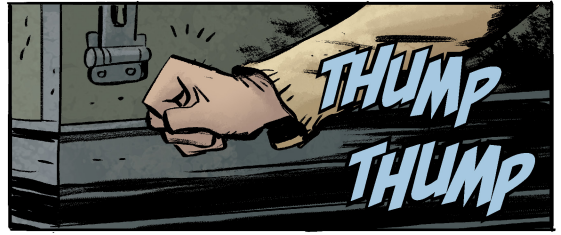


"...YOU CAN
DESTROY
BALTIMORE AT
LAST. YOU WILL
BE RID OF HIM,
FOREVER."

NORTH OF
OSTIA, ON THE
WESTERN COAST
OF ITALY.











"...YOU ARE PERFECTLY SAFE HERE FOR THE MOMENT..."



"...WE WILL GET YOU TO ROME..."



"...TRUST ME..."



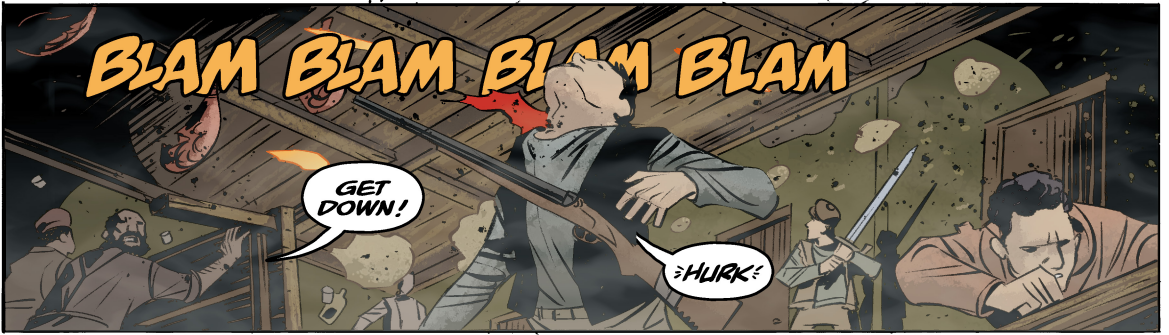
"...EVERY-THING IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN."

CHAPTER FOUR

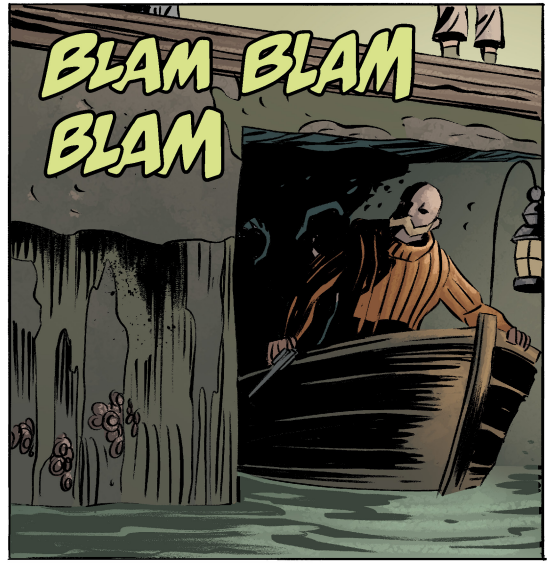
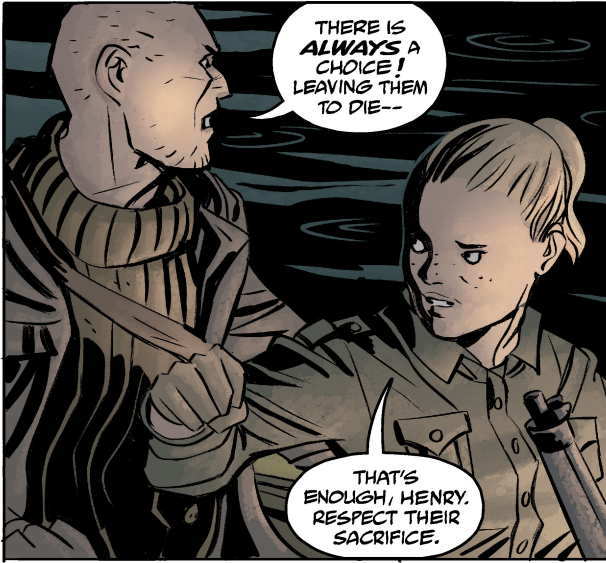




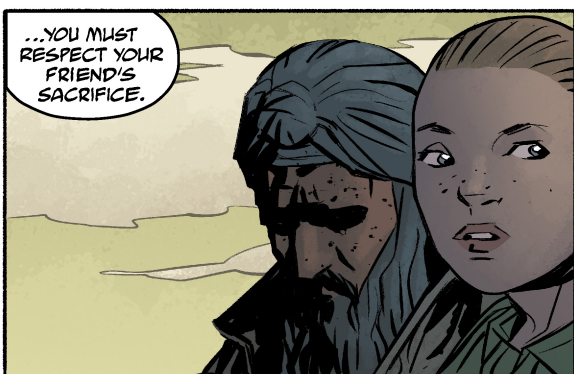




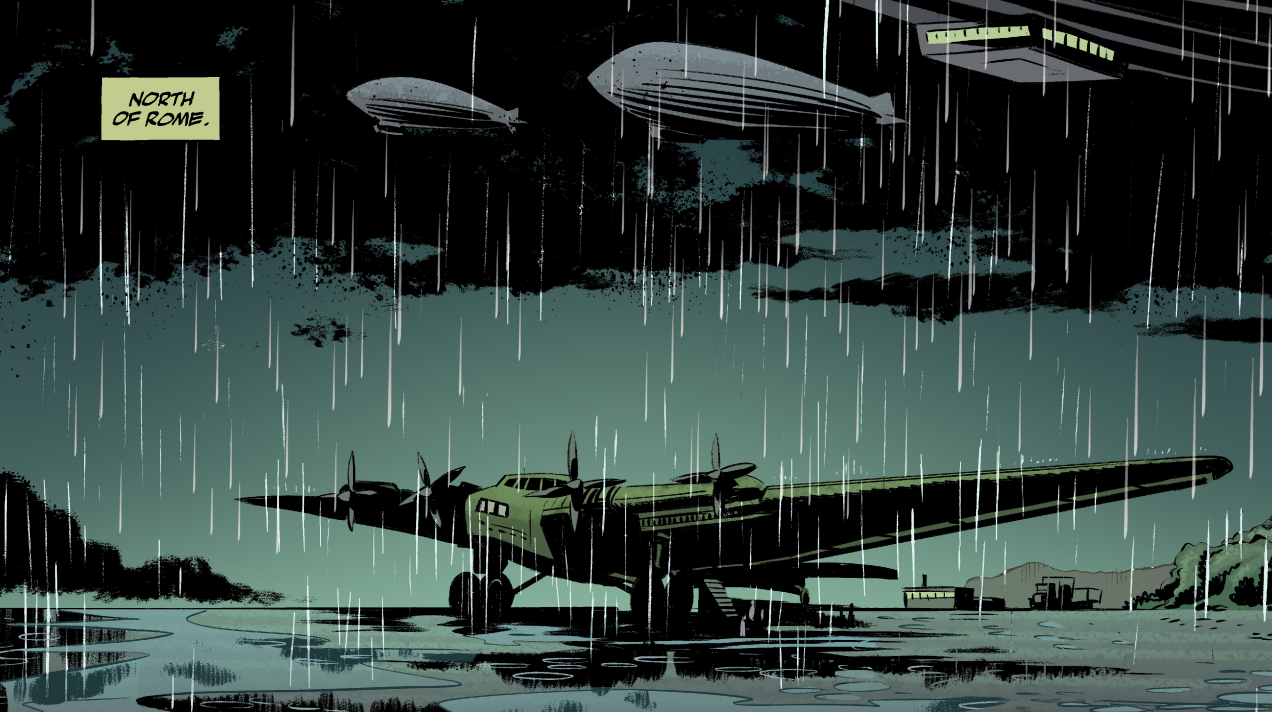








NORTH
OF ROME.



THIS IS A
PROFOUNDLY
TERRIBLE
IDEA.

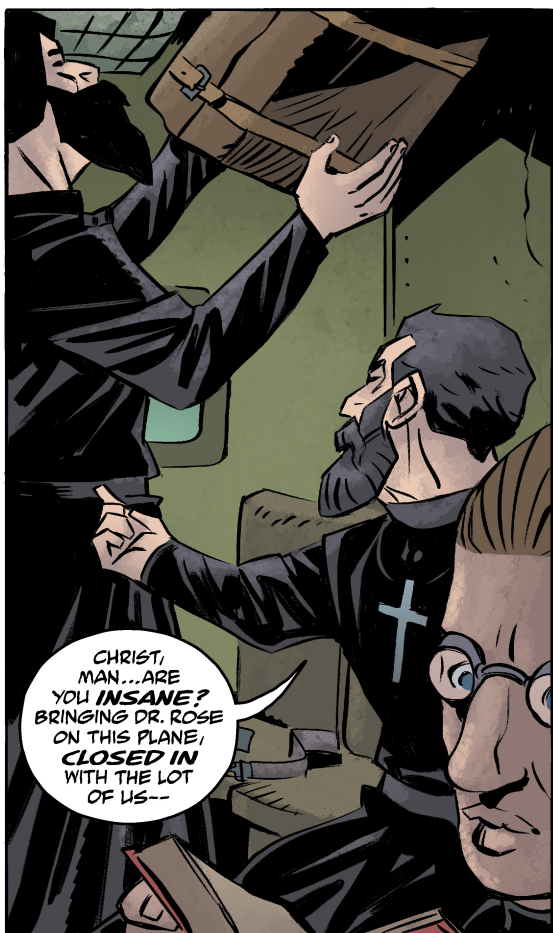
JUDGE
RIGO...



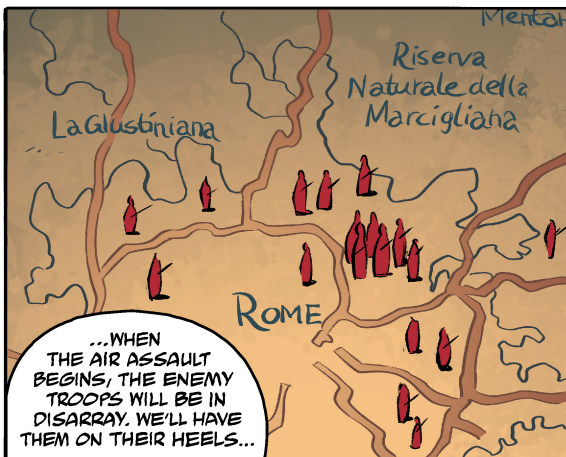
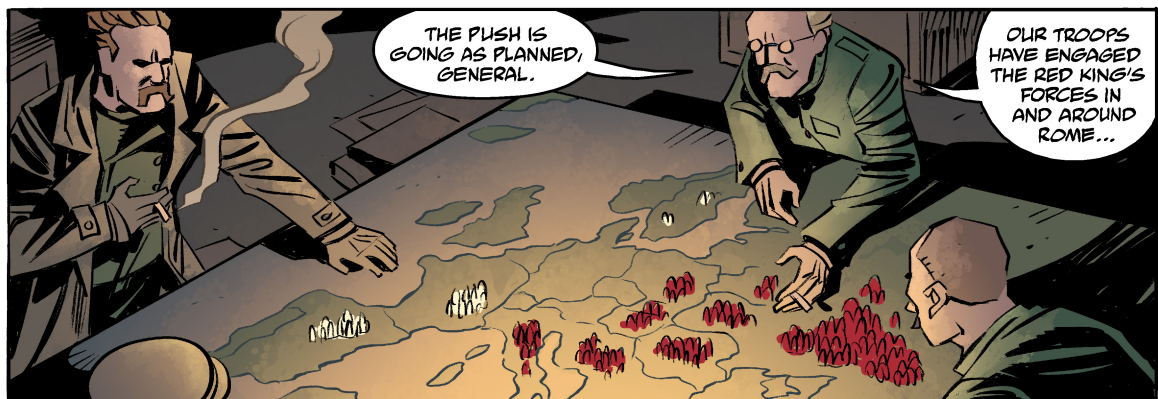
...IF YOU
ARE TRYING TO
PROVE THAT THE
RUMORS OF YOUR
COWARDICE ARE
UNFOUNDED, YOU
ARE DOING A
TERRIBLE
JOB.

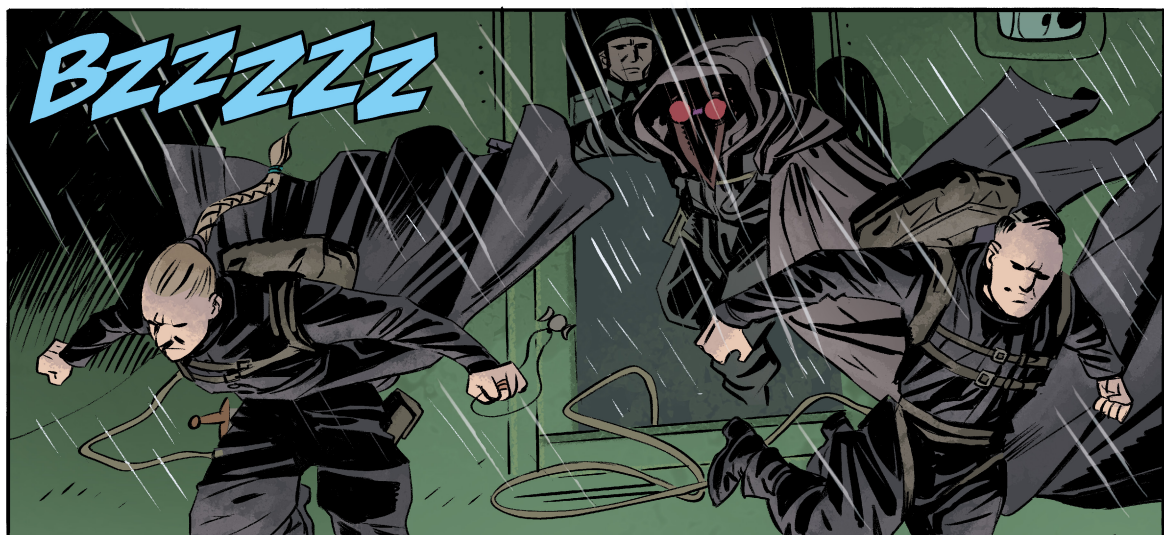
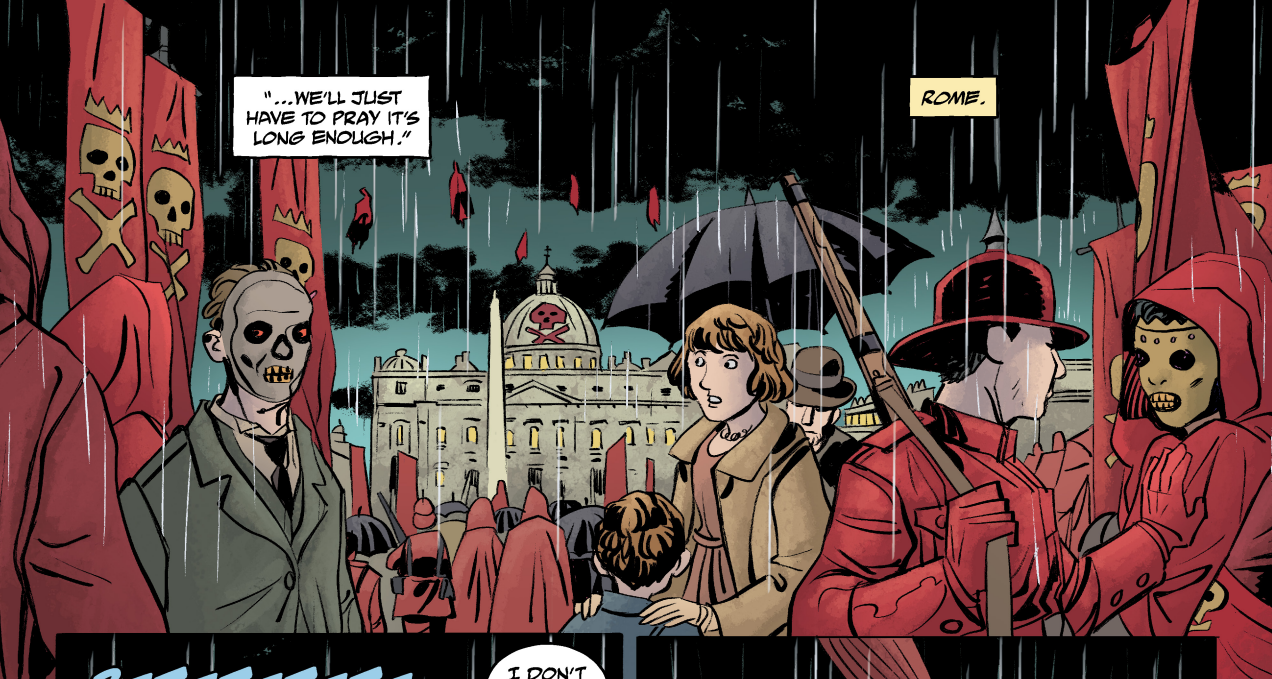


MAN WAS NOT
MEANT TO FLY. I
DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU HAVE PLANNED,
BROTHER GERHARDT,
BUT I WOULD
LIKE TO...

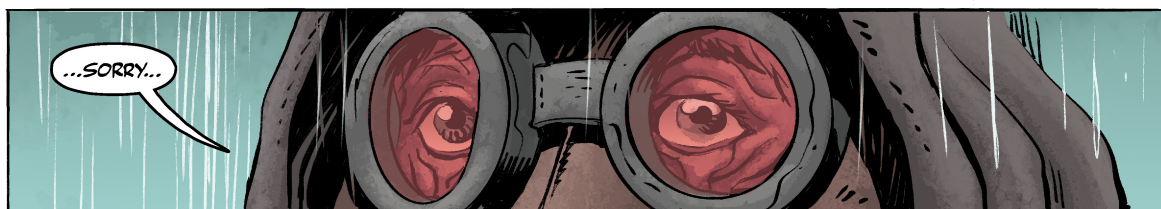
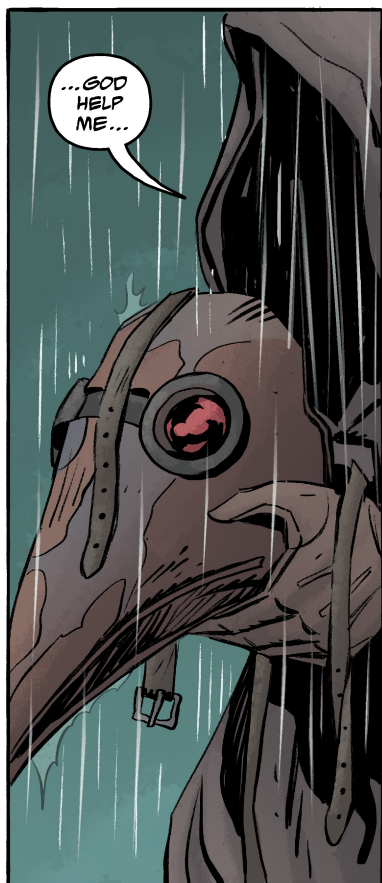








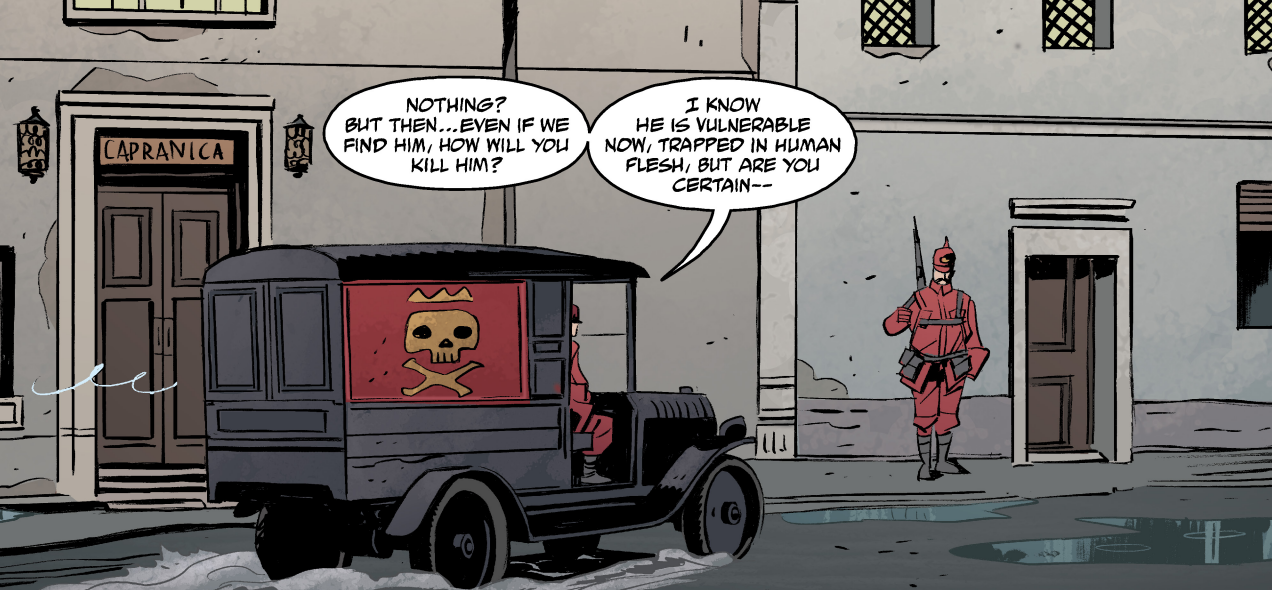












NOTHING?
BUT THEN...EVEN IF WE
FIND HIM, HOW WILL YOU
KILL HIM?

I KNOW
HE IS VULNERABLE
NOW, TRAPPED IN HUMAN
FLESH, BUT ARE YOU
CERTAIN--



DON'T BE A FOOL,
HARISH. NOTHING IS
CERTAIN, EXCEPT
FOR OUR DEATHS. LORD
BALTIMORE WILL FORGE
AHEAD, AS ALWAYS. OUR
BODIES WILL LIE WHERE
THEY FALL, OR FLOAT
AWAY LIKE MR.
KIDD'S--

SOFIA--



WE
COULDN'T
HAVE GONE
BACK FOR KIDD.
YOU KNOW
THAT.

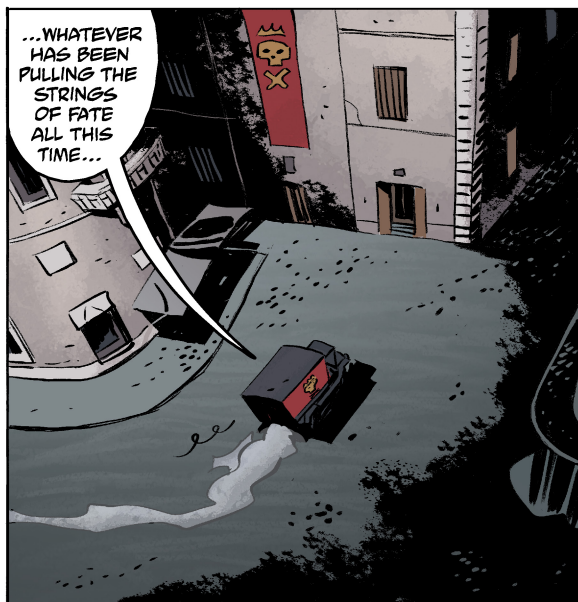


"...NOT ALL
OF US HAVE
BEEN SO
FORTUNATE."



THE RED KING MAY
OR MAY NOT BE
VULNERABLE, BUT I
MIGHT **NEVER** GET
THIS CLOSE TO HIM
AGAIN. WHATEVER
FORCES HAVE
FORGED ME INTO
THIS THING I'VE
BECOME...

I DO.
JUST AS I KNOW
THAT I'M AS EAGER
AS HENRY IS TO SEE
AN END TO THIS. I
THINK I'VE MANAGED
TO AVOID BECOMING A
MONSTER, AT LEAST
SO FAR...





OH...
SHIT..

WITCHES.

SO MUCH
FOR SPIES
AND SECRET
PLANS.



DON'T BE FOOLS.
WE'RE SUPPOSED
TO TAKE YOU
ALIVE.

HOLD ON...YOU
KNEW WE WERE
COMING?



WAIT.

ARE YOU
INSANE?
WAIT FOR
WHAT?

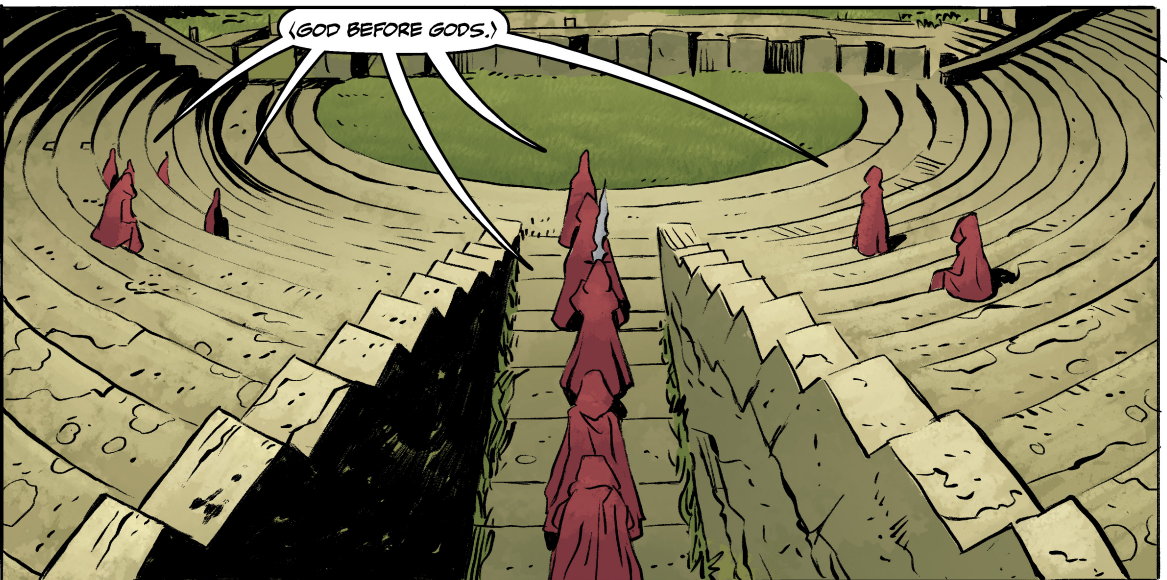
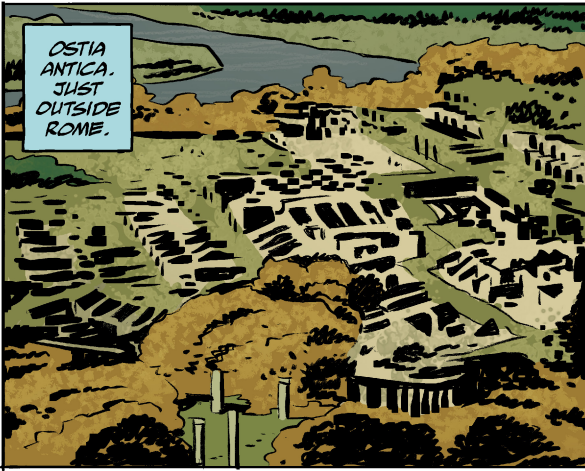


NO!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

SNAP

KRAK

FOR
THAT.





CHAPTER FIVE





"THE TIDE IS
TURNING,
GENTLEMEN..."



"...AND NOT IN
OUR FAVOR..."



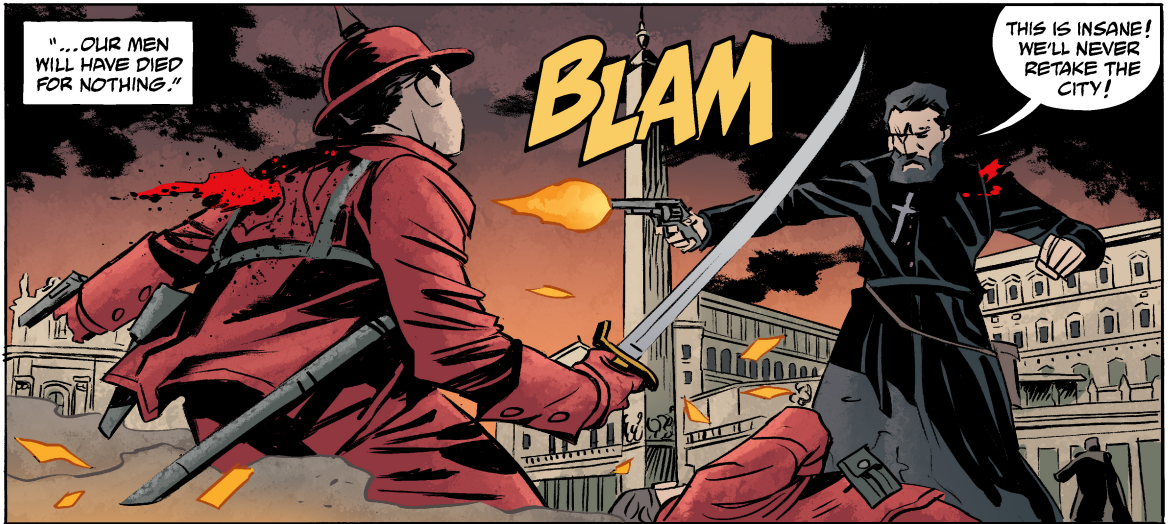
"...WE MUST CALL
FOR A RETREAT..."



"...OR WE
RISK LOSING
ALL OF
EUROPE."

"IF WE
RETREAT
NOW, THERE'S
STILL A
CHANCE--"

GENERAL,
WE **CAN'T** DO
THAT. WE'VE MADE
OUR PROMISES TO
LORD BALTIMORE.
IF WE DON'T GIVE
HIM THE TIME HE
NEEDS TO FIND
AND DESTROY
THE RED
KING..."







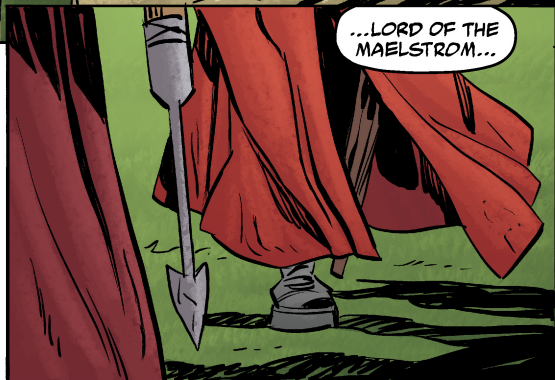




"...I COULD FOLLOW HER ANYWHERE."



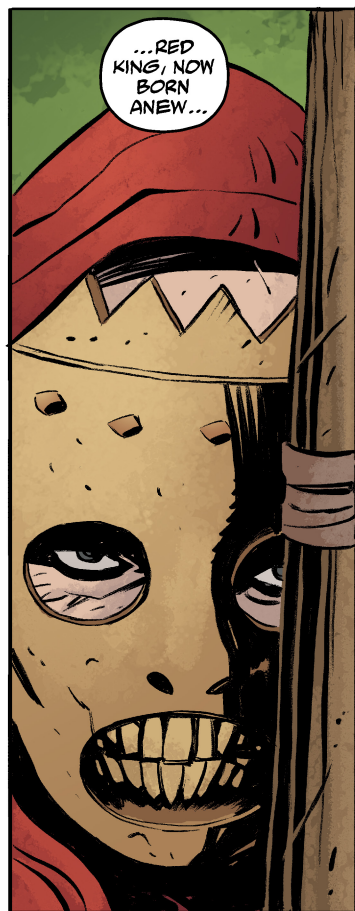
GOD BEFORE GODS...



...LORD OF THE MAELSTROM...



...FATHER OF MONSTERS IN THE FLESH OF MAN...



...RED KING, NOW BORN ANEW...



...NOW CROWNED
EMPEROR OF THE
WORLD...MASTER
OF LIGHT AND
DARKNESS...



NO.

THOMAS.



RISE,
SACRED
MAJESTY, AND
TAKE THIS
BLADE...

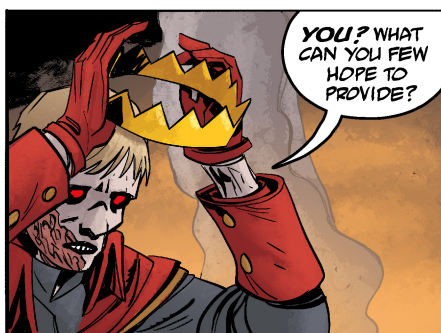


"...REMAKE
THE EARTH
INTO THE WORLD
YOU DESIRE."



I FEEL...

...NOTHING.



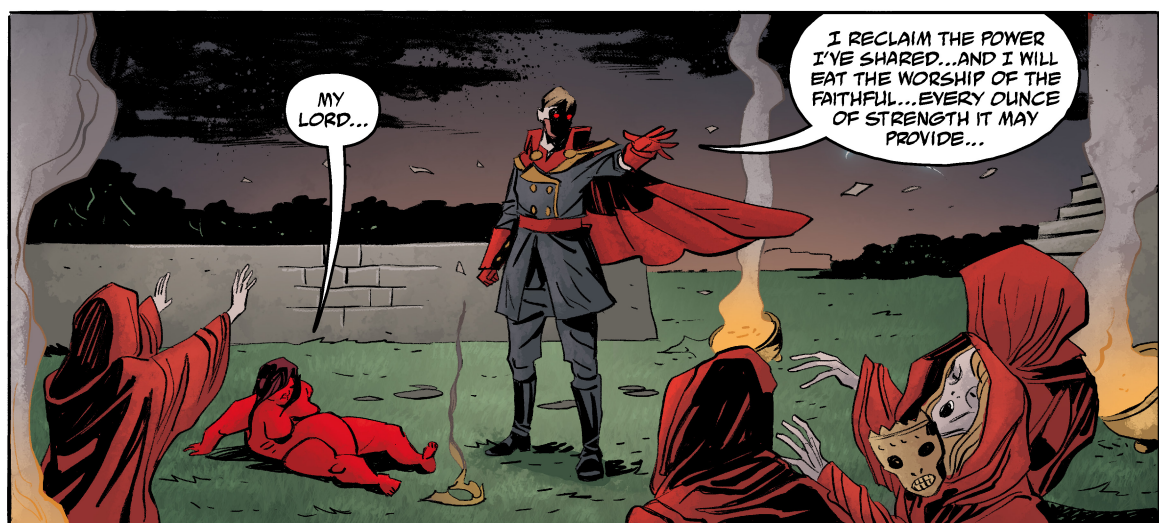
I HAVE **HEARD** YOUR VOWS BEFORE, MADAME BLAVATSKY--AND **SEE** WHERE THEY'VE LEFT ME?! DIMINISHED TO **THIS!**

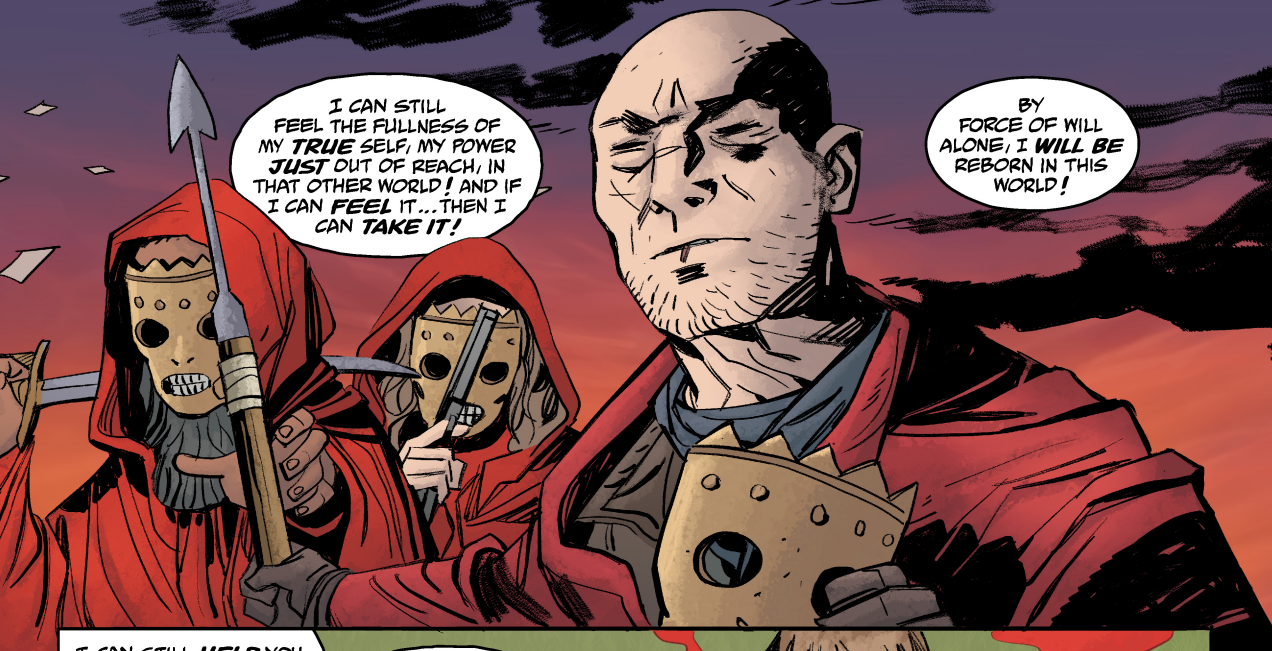
»HURK«

I AM THE RED KING...

"...IN THE FULLNESS OF MY POWER, I AM **ALL THERE IS**. I AM **LIGHT AND DARKNESS**. I AM NOT LORD OF THE MAELSTROM BUT THE MAELSTROM **ITSELF**. AND YOU HAVE MADE ME **SMALL...**"







I CAN STILL
FEEL THE FULLNESS OF
MY **TRUE** SELF, MY POWER
JUST OUT OF REACH, IN
THAT OTHER WORLD! AND IF
I CAN **FEEL** IT... THEN I
CAN **TAKE** IT!

BY
FORCE OF WILL
ALONE, I **WILL BE**
REBORN IN THIS
WORLD!

I CAN STILL **HELP** YOU,
MASTER. THE **RITUAL...**
THE **CORONATION...**
WE CAN START AGAIN.
THERE'S SO MUCH WE
CAN STILL ACCOMPLISH
TOGETHER--

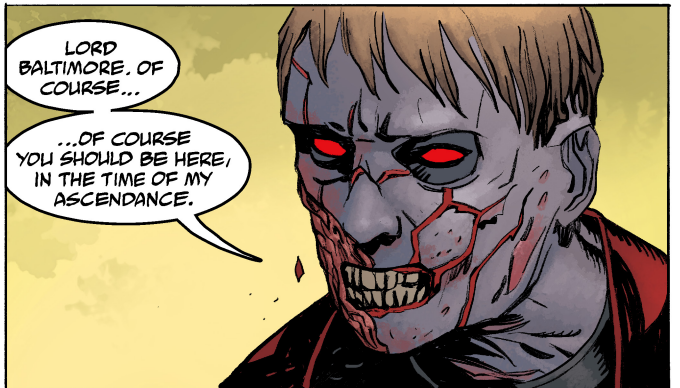
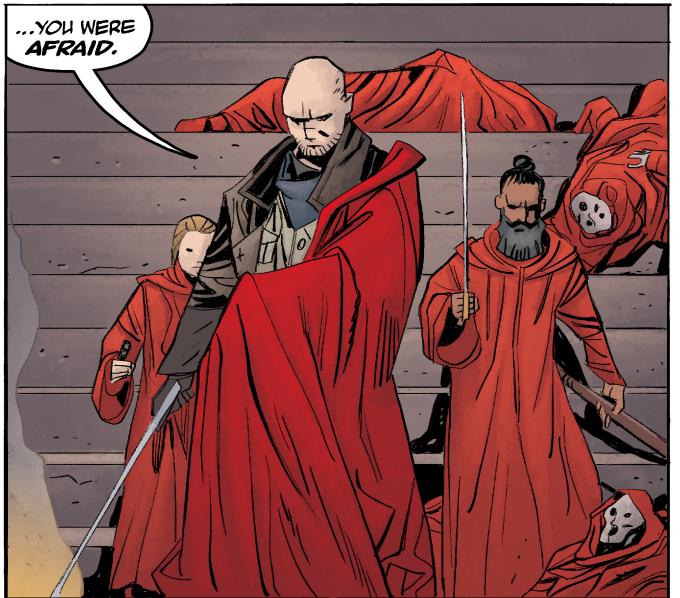
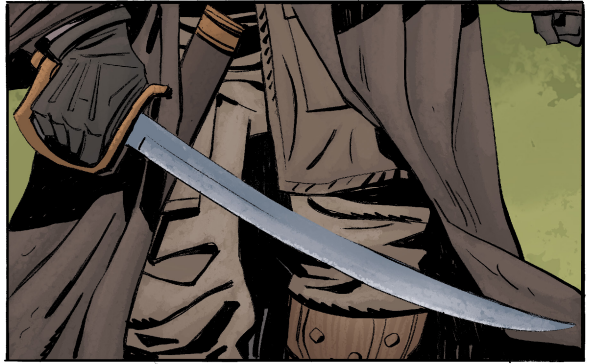
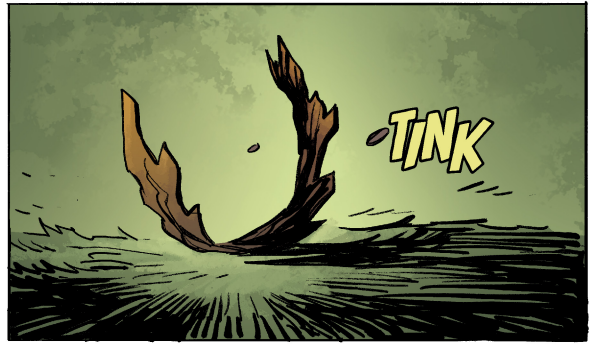
I NEED
NOTHING MORE
FROM YOU, WITCH! YOU
WERE ONLY EVER LOYAL TO
YOURSELF. I **KNEW** IT,
BUT I **FEARED** BEING
ALONE IN THIS WEAKENED
FLESH! **ME! I FELT**
FEAR!



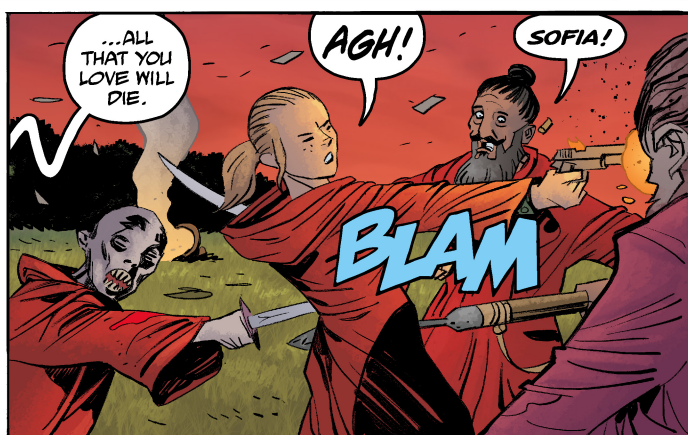
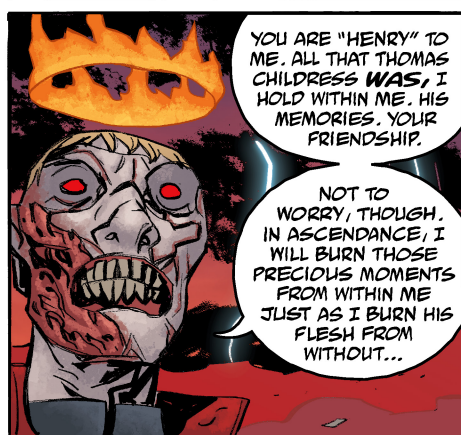
YOU **FED** ON THAT
FEAR! **YOU**, WHO ARE TO
BLAME FOR WHAT I'VE
BECOME! YOU THOUGHT
TO USE ME AS **YOUR**
PAWN!

IT'S
NOT TRUE! I
AM **YOURS**, MY
LORD!

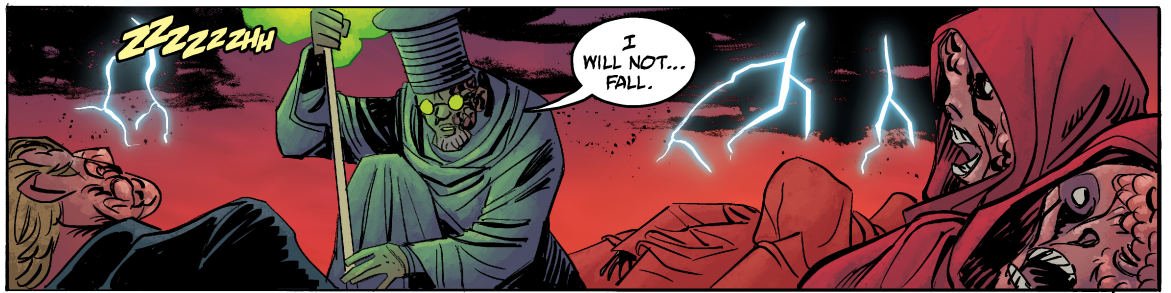
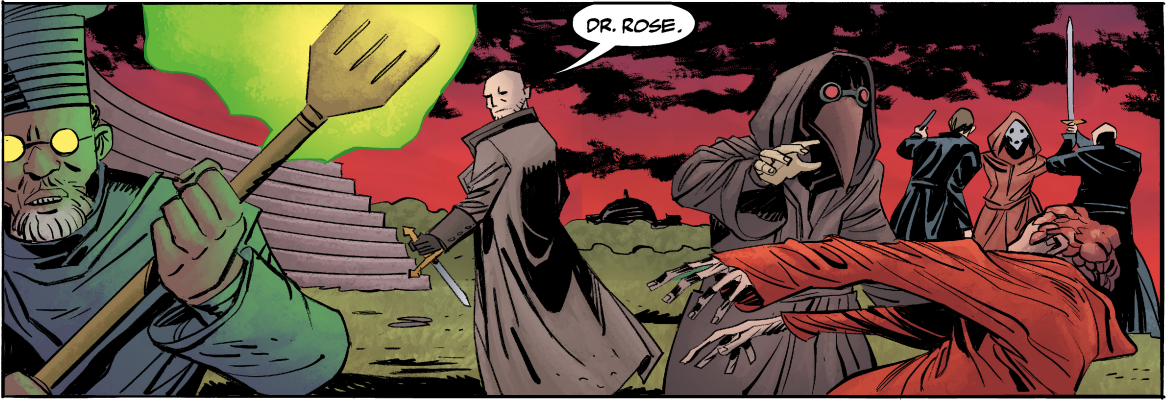
NO.











"...DEATH IS NOT THROUGH WITH US YET."

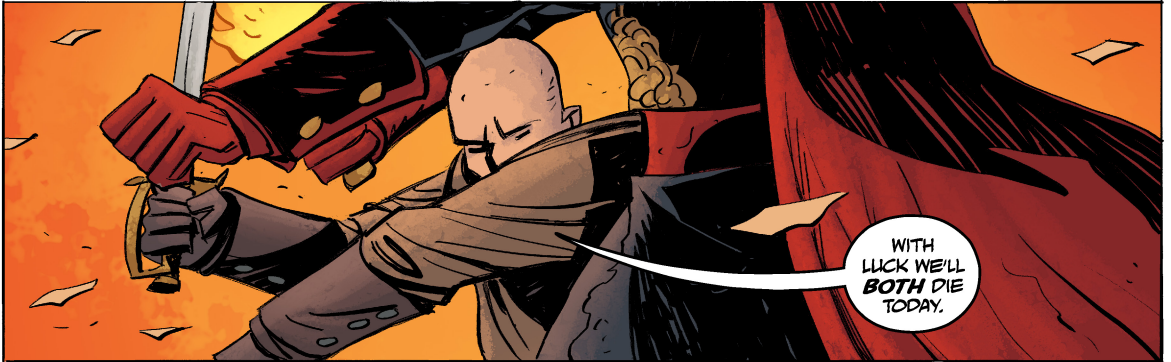
YOU...

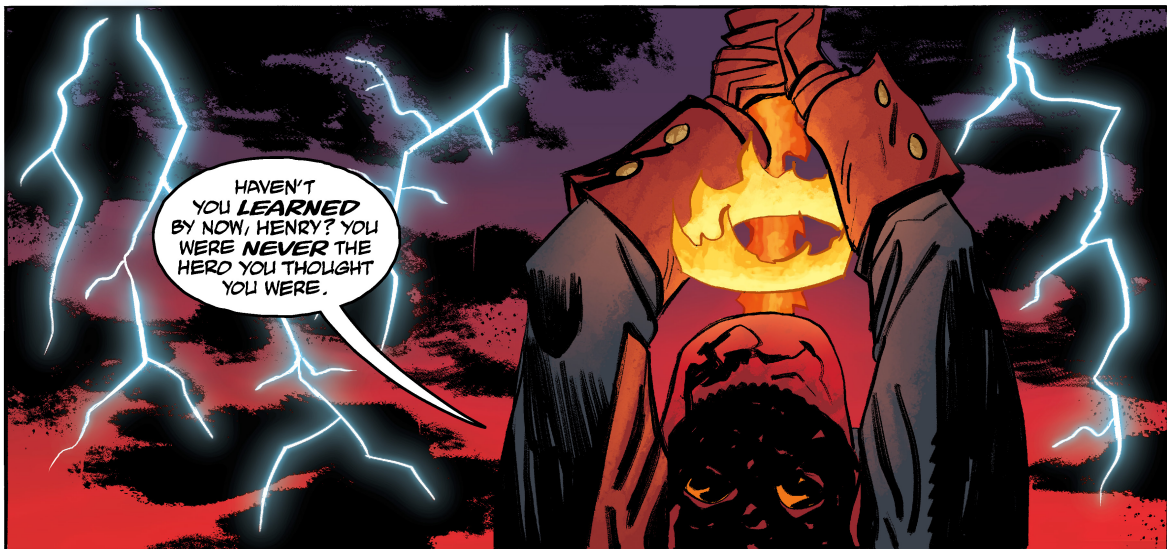
"...YOU ARE NOT THOMAS CHILDRESS. YOU'RE NO DIFFERENT FROM THE WORMS THAT FEED ON CORPSES IN THE GRAVE."

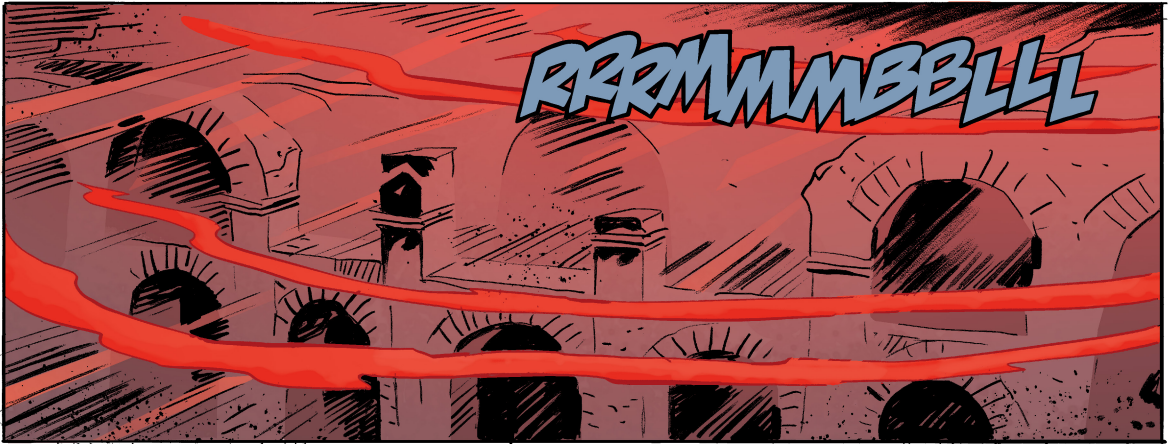
YET I REMEMBER HUMANITY. WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO CARE FOR OTHER PEOPLE, TO FEEL NOBILITY AND A SENSE OF HONOR...AND I DESPISE THOSE EMOTIONS. THEY DISGUST ME.

THANKS TO THE WEAKNESS OF YOUR DEAD FRIEND, I REMEMBER THE BURDEN MEN CALL LIFE.

I'M A GHOST NOW, INHABITING THIS SHELL, JUST AS YOU HAUNT THE WORLD FROM INSIDE THAT HUSK. IF YOU CAN RELIEVE ME OF THE BURDEN OF LIFE...









CAN IT
BE?



HENRY...

YOU
MISUNDER-
STOOD ME
ALL ALONG.
BOTH OF
YOU.

I NEVER
THOUGHT OF
MYSELF AS ANY
KIND OF HERO.
JUST THE UNLUCKY
BASTARD WHO
LIVED WHEN HE
SHOULD'VE
DIED.

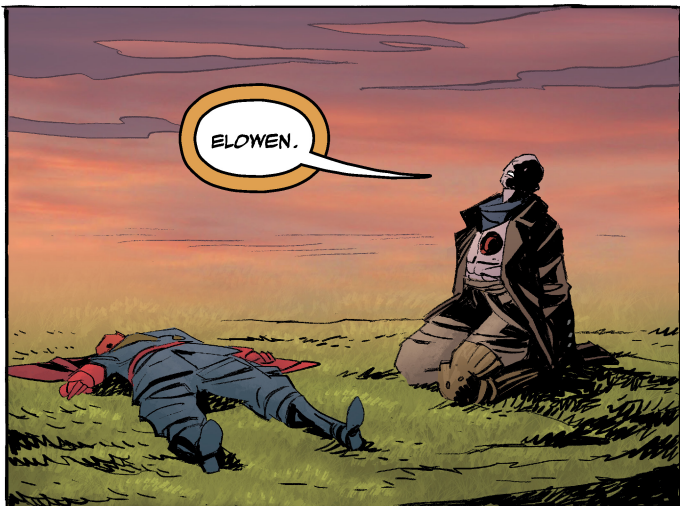
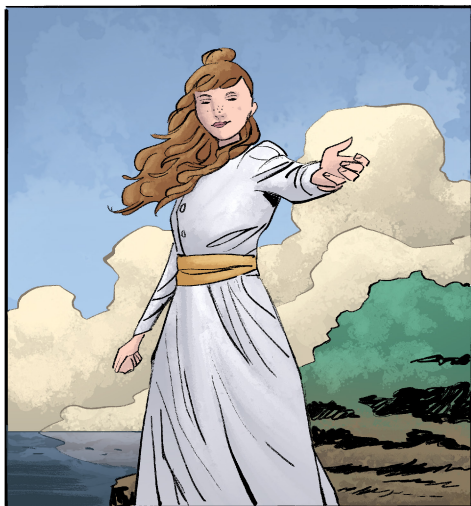
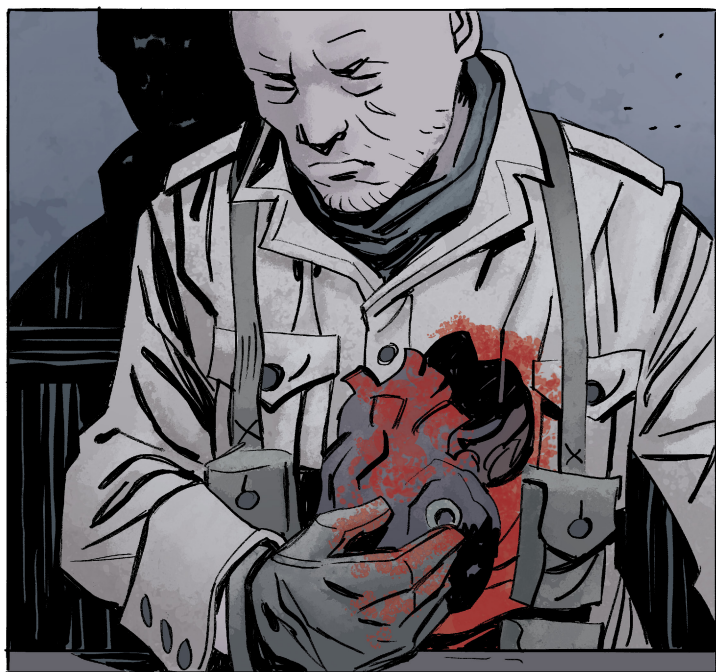
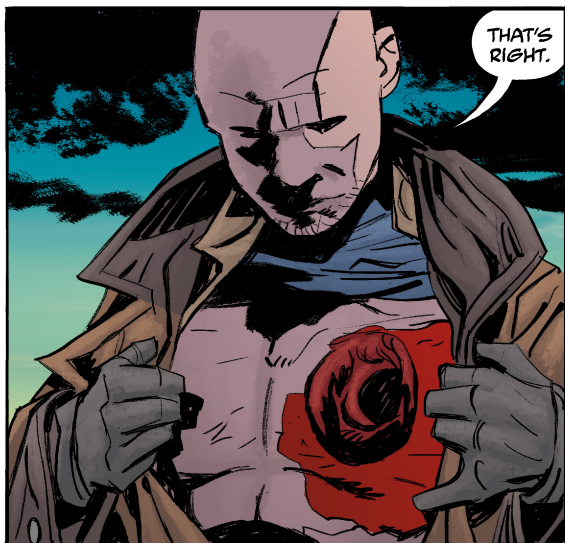


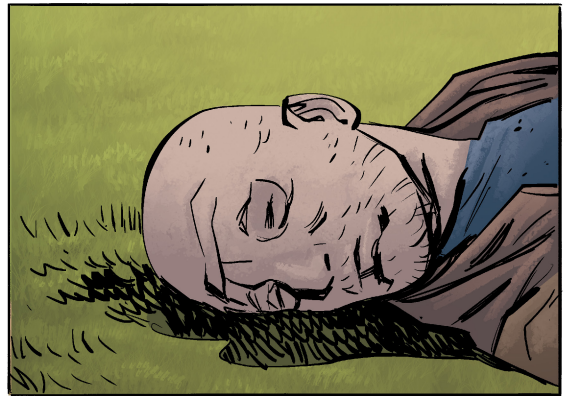
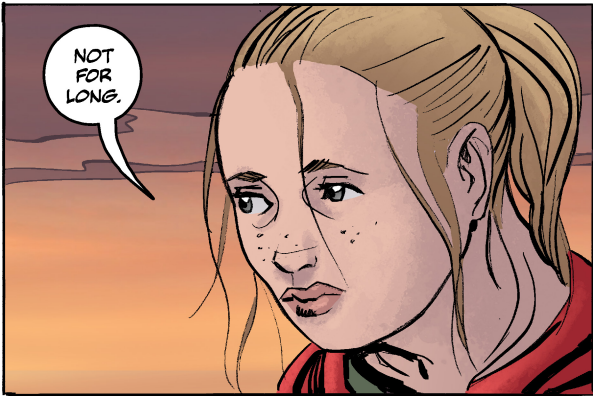
GOOD-
BYE, OLD
FRIEND.

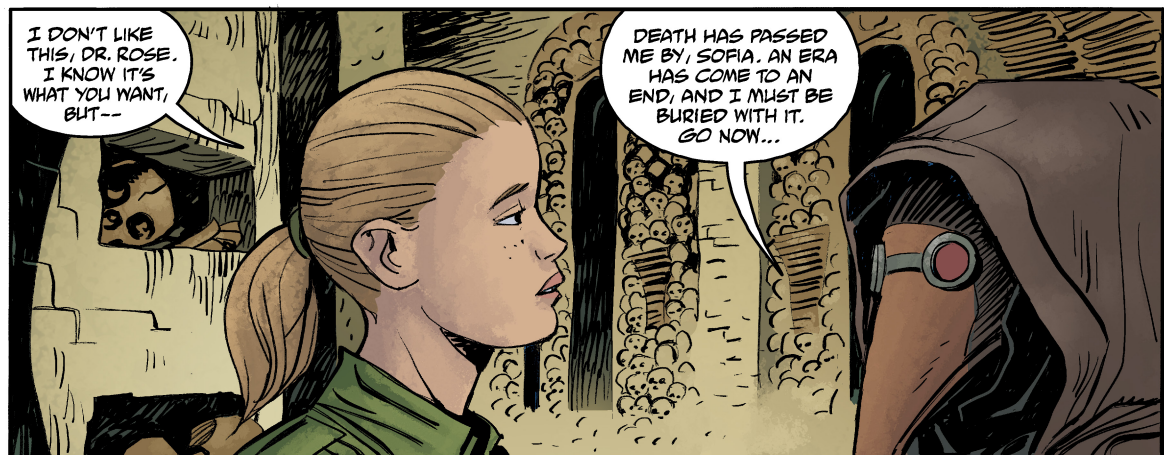


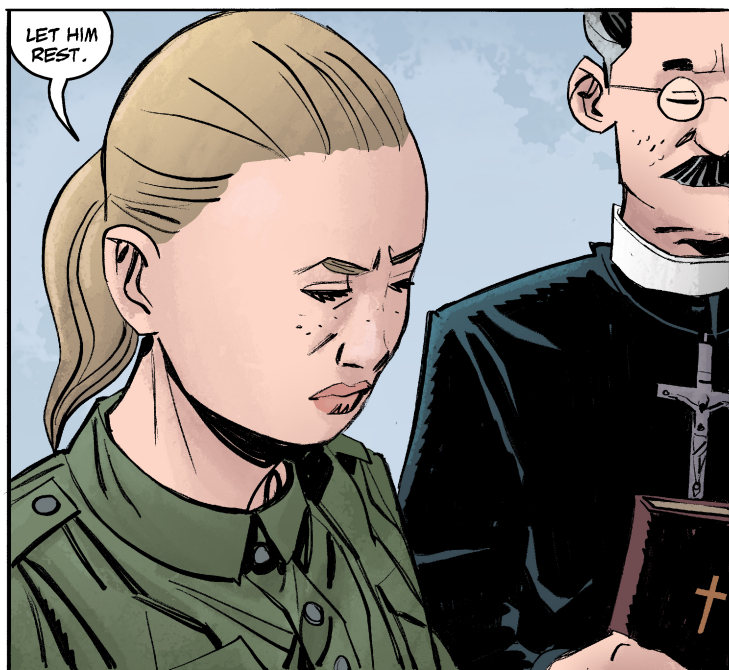
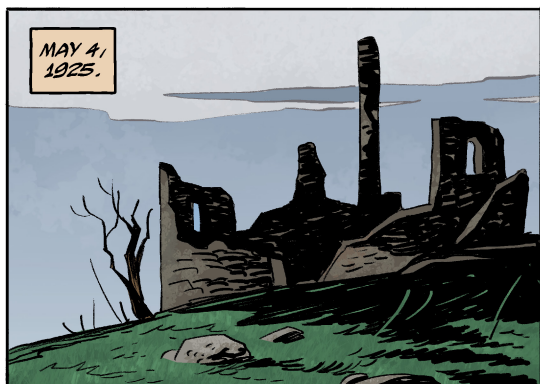
ARE
YOU HAPPY
NOW? I'VE
DONE YOUR
WORK!

NOW
WHERE
IS MY
REWARD
?









AFTERWORD

by

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN

TO QUOTE THE IMMORTAL Bugs Bunny...
“Well, what did you expect from an opera? A *happy ending*?”

Yet in a weird way, this *is* Lord Baltimore’s happy ending. In a series this bleak, in a life as layered in sorrow as his, with Baltimore in a constant state of grief and with doom hanging over him like the Sword of Damocles, his death is the only way this story could end. After Haigus had murdered his entire family and turned them into vampires, Baltimore felt damned. Doomed and utterly hollow. As he hunted Haigus across Europe, he felt sure that when he had finally had his vengeance, he would die—because revenge was his only reason to stay alive. In a scene first revealed in the novel and then replayed in *Volume 4: Chapel of Bones*, Baltimore finally killed his nemesis, expecting death as a much-desired reward. But death did not claim him. Distraught and confused, he tore out his own heart and discovered it was nothing but a lump of tin, somehow fused with his murdered wife Elowen’s wedding ring.

Whatever powers there were in the universe were not going to allow Baltimore to die. They had plans for him. Though he continued to fight heroically, in that moment he became, in essence, a slave to...God? The cosmic balance? Call it what you will, but that power made Baltimore a pawn in the fight to keep the Red King from retaking the world. Hopeless, furious, resentful, wanting nothing but death, he became less and less human. And yet there were glimmers of light and hope, interactions with the people he gathered around him that reminded him that there were things in the world and in humanity that were worth fighting for.

Worth living for.

As he marched inexorably toward destiny and death, Baltimore regained a sliver of his humanity, and that was enough.

It’s been a dozen years or more since I got that phone call from Mike saying, “Hey, you know that vampire graphic novel I’ve been telling you about for years? I finally realized I’m never going to draw it. Any interest in doing it as a novel?” Or something like that. In that time, the world and the story of *Baltimore* have grown to become something bigger and better than I ever imagined. Creating this world with Mike, expanding upon it over forty-one issues, seeing it come to life with some of the greatest creators in comics, has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life.

So thanks to Mike for that first phone call and everything since. Thanks to Ben Stenbeck and Peter Bergting, our extraordinary artistic partners on this journey. Thanks to Dave Stewart and Michelle Madsen, whose subtle and remarkable coloring have elevated every issue. Thanks to the wide array of Dark Horse editorial staffers who’ve worked on this book, including Katii O’Brien, Shantel LaRocque, Daniel Chabon, and Hannah Means-Shannon, not to mention all the folks at Dark Horse who helped to make this book happen and bring it to an international audience in a multitude of languages. Thanks to the various publishers around the world who’ve presented these stories in their own languages. Finally, thanks to Scott Allie, our editor from the beginning, who has made me a better writer with every volume.

And, lest I forget, thanks to you, dear reader.

Farewell, Lord Baltimore. You’ve earned your rest. You’ve earned this “happy ending.”

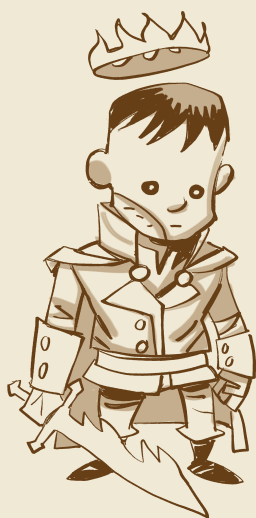
For now.

BALTIMORE™

THE RED KINGDOM

SKETCHBOOK

Notes by Scott Allie



The road not taken.
Art by Peter.



.BERGTUNG.

2012

Studies of a more
appropriately
grim Baltimore.

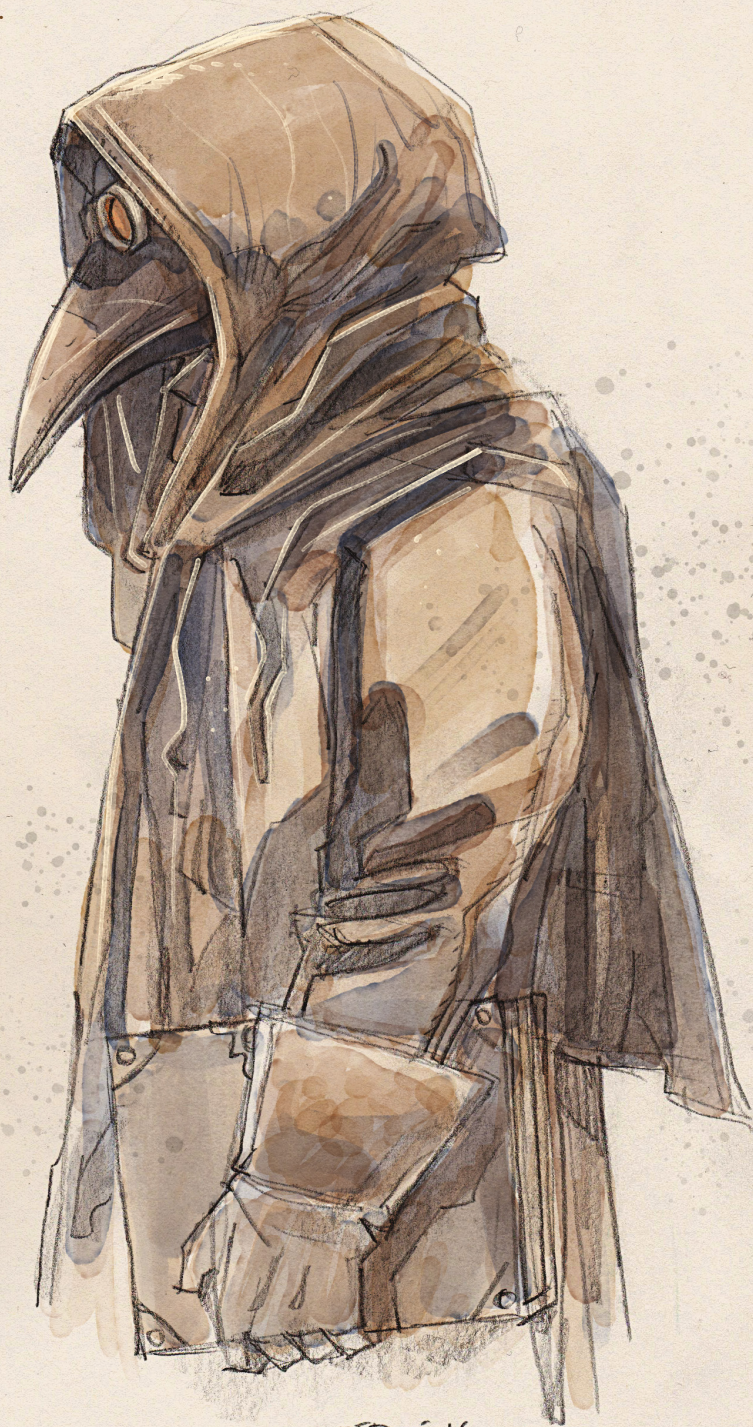






The first time he appears in the script, in the second chapter, the villain is described like so: “In a dark window of the monastery, the Red King (in the body of Thomas Childress) stands looking out, dissatisfied with everything, himself included. He is still recognizable as Childress, but his eyes are pink with red pupils and his body is pale, grayish, and slightly emaciated.” It was important for Peter to convey Childress’s humanity within the Red King’s mercurial darkness.

Doctor Rose
and (*facing*) Sofia.



• BERGTING •
2017

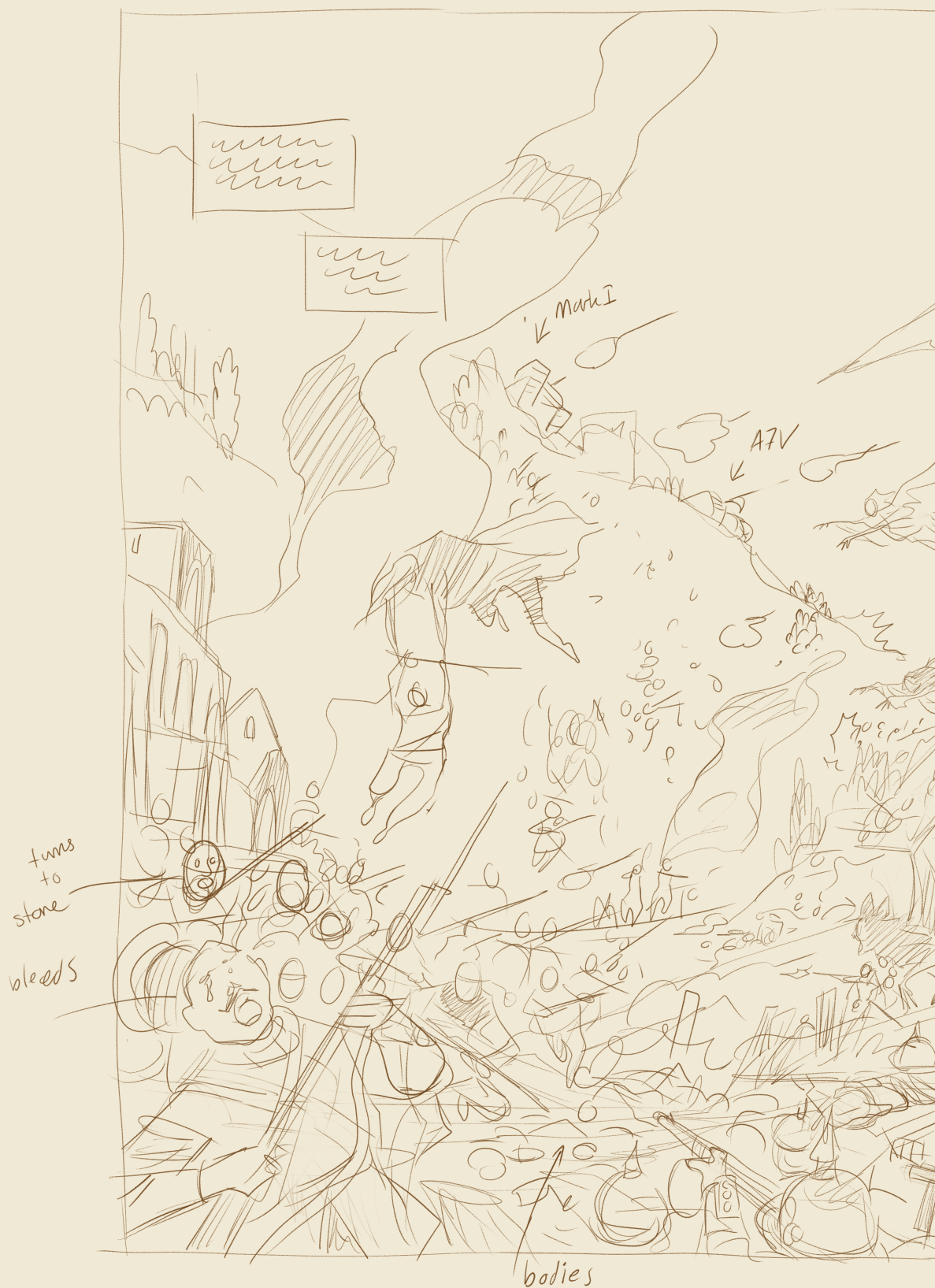




Harish.

Facing: Ben took this cover for issue #4 all the way to color before deciding to abandon it in favor of the more iconic and symbolic cover seen on page 80 of this volume.

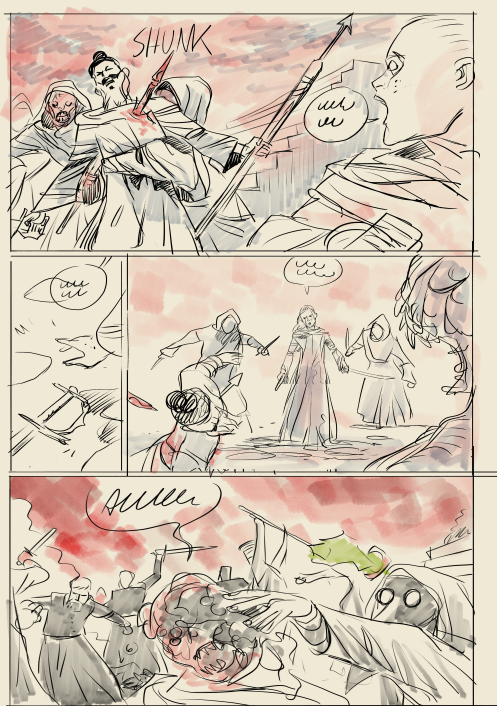
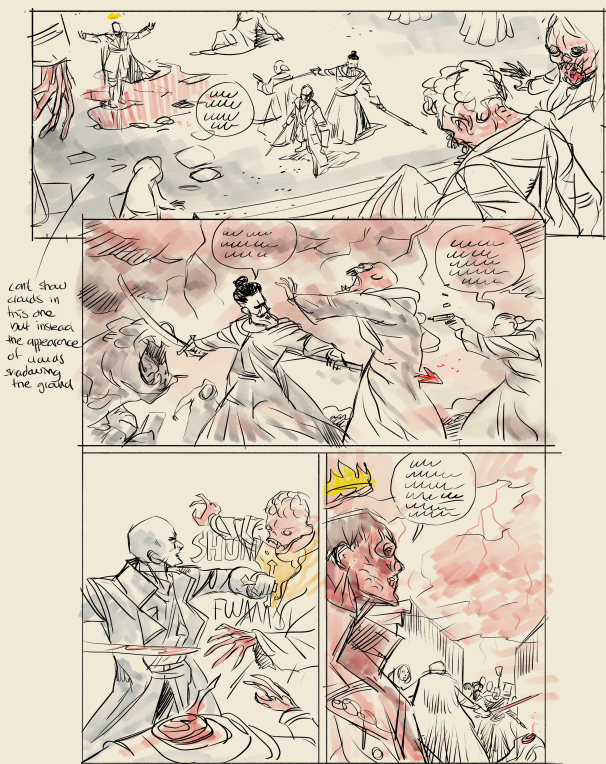




Peter and Michelle went over and above in the planning and execution of the opening battle spread of the book, in part so that it could be turned into a trailer on YouTube.



As the trailer begins, we move from detail to detail, with limited animation, gradually pulling away to reveal the full image, then zooming way out to the issue #1 cover. Look for *Baltimore: The Red Kingdom* trailer on Youtube on the Dark Horse channel.



Compare these pencils to the battle near the end of the final issue (pages 118-120). Usually we like to show art that reveals an evolution from roughs and finishes, but here you see how tight Peter got it from the get go, with the only notable change in the top right page (see 119), panel 3. He punched in closer for the Red King's rant, since otherwise there's no close shot of a face on the page. Peter's pencil technique varies a lot, seldom looking like what we traditionally think of as comics pencils—they couldn't very well go to someone else to ink. Some pages feature simple line drawings, and others have value laid down with the edge of the pencil, as seen in the sketchbook of the previous volume, *Empty Graves*. Even in the process of doing *The Red Kingdom* his technique varied a lot, with these among the most colorful pages, the red washes and other accents helping him plan out the values and the mood of the page.

MIKE MIGNOLA's fascination with ghosts and monsters began at an early age; reading *Dracula* at age twelve introduced him to Victorian literature and folklore, from which he has never recovered. Starting in 1982 as a bad inker for Marvel Comics, he swiftly evolved into a not-so-bad artist. By the late 1980s, he had begun to develop his own unique graphic style, with mainstream projects like *Cosmic Odyssey* and *Batman: Gotham by Gaslight*. In 1994, he published the first *Hellboy* series through Dark Horse. There are over fifteen *Hellboy* graphic novels (with more on the way), several spinoff titles (*B.P.R.D.*, *Lobster Johnson*, *Abe Sapien*, and *Sir Edward Grey: Witchfinder*), prose books, animated films, and two live-action films starring Ron Perlman. Along the way he worked on Francis Ford Coppola's film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), was a production designer for Disney's *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001), and was the visual consultant to director Guillermo del Toro on *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004), and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008). Mike's books have earned numerous awards and are published in a great many countries. Mike lives somewhere in Southern California with his wife, daughter, and cat.

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN is the author of such novels as *Of Saints and Shadows*, *The Myth Hunters*, *The Boys Are Back in Town*, *Strangewood*, and *Tin Men*. He has also written books for teens and young adults, including *When Rose Wakes*, *Soulless*, *Poison Ink*, and *The Secret Journeys of Jack London*, coauthored with Tim Lebbon. His other work with Mike Mignola includes the novels *Baltimore; or, The Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Vampire* and *Joe Golem and the Drowning City*. Golden was born and raised in Massachusetts, where he still lives with his family. His original novels have been published in more than fourteen languages in countries around the world. Please visit him at ChristopherGolden.com.

One could assume that living in Sweden has influenced PETER BERGTING's work. Certainly growing up surrounded by comics did help to "escape" the gloom, all those long, dark, winters. Being a comic book artist was perhaps not the best career choice for a 7 year old, but some 40+ years later it actually did pay off. Peter still lives in Sweden with his family and two nervous dogs.

Lord Baltimore's climactic chapter begins in chaos and frenzy. As war and monsters plague Europe, Baltimore himself is missing, and the living incarnation of evil on Earth takes hold of the Vatican.



“With a mythology as complex as the one Mike Mignola has constructed over the years, it’s hard to consider any book a true jumping-on point. And yet, that’s exactly what *Baltimore: The Red Kingdom* #1 offers—a new reader-friendly continuation of an ongoing story.”—IGN

“If the terrors of this first issue are only precursors of what’s to come, this is going to be an epic series. Perfect reading for fans of the supernatural. Once you start, you won’t be able to stop.”—SciFiPulse

